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ABSTRACT

This set of case studies describes six local elementary and junior high school improvement projects. Chosen from the 30 comprising the Consortium Project's pool of target schools, these school sites represent a mix of urban, suburban, and rural districts in three of the project's six states. Each study describes (1) the social context, historical background, and educational climate of the school district; (2) facilities, organizational structure, faculty, and student body of the schools; (3) the school's involvement with the Consortium, including problem identification, program selection, training of faculty, and program implementation or adaptation; (4) decision making roles; and (5) outcomes. All six studies are followed by appendices and epilogues, and a discussion of cross-site themes and issues by members of the Harvard Graduate School of Education is presented. A bibliography is provided. (FM)

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CASE STUDIES IN PROGRAM IMPROVEMENT

Christopher J. Drew
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A Publication of

The NETWORK

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PREFACE TO THE CONSORTIUM REPORT SERIES

There are several indications that the R&D Utilization Program was a complex undertaking. There have been attempts to help schools become better problem solvers, thereby introducing change as an appropriate response to problematic conditions, and there have been attempts to help schools apply existing R&D. RDU, however, was an explicit attempt to introduce change in schools through group problem solving and the application of existing educational R&D.

RDU was also structurally complex. Rarely, for example, are programs developed that both fund an activity and provide the wherewithal to study it. Typically, contractors and grantees of research projects are told outright that funds are for research purposes and not for operational components of the phenomenon being studied, while service projects and demonstration programs allocate such a small portion of their budgets to evaluation (even broadly conceived) that little by way of findings is produced.

The Consortium Project not only accepted these challenges, it introduced some of its own. Its linking agencies, in addition to being geographically dispersed, were also diverse in their structures, missions, staffing, and orientation to schools. Secondly, there was a deliberate attempt to select schools in each state that reflected a demographic mix, so that we could experiment with linking agent strategies in urban, suburban, and rural settings. Furthermore, schools were selected for participation in the program based on the probability that solutions to their problems would impact on several aspects of school life. Quite obviously, both the project and the RDU program at large have been a rich source of experience for study and reflection.

It is appropriate, therefore, that at the end of such a program there be more than one publication to document the effects of its presence and to provide as many perspectives on the experience as possible. Before commenting on the volumes in the Series, however, I would like to acknowledge the work and the intense involvement of the project's linking agents and their supervisors.

Consortium linking agents were faced with the awesome tasks of not only helping schools introduce curricular improvements, but also of helping to define and implement a new role. In

addition they were asked to document their activities to provide the research component of the project with baseline material for developing case studies. To Donna Bellorado, Nancy Dannenberg, Joseph DePaolo, Leslie Hergert, Carol Johnson, Linda McNeely, Lana Rahn, and Beverly Vifian goes a sincere thanks for your energy and your willingness to put yourselves under several microscopes. Thanks also for representing the project in interviews, newsletters, and various professional meetings and forums.

In addition to working with these linking agents I have been fortunate to work with several experienced educators who acted as agency supervisors and subcontract managers for the project. They include James Connett, Diane Lassman, Max McConkey, Norman Oppenheim, Harry Osgood, Ralph Parish, Margaret Robinson, and Keith Wright. On several occasions they were called upon to rise above their individual and agency priorities to act in the best interest of the project, and each time they did.

The Consortium has been characterized as an anomalous collaboration among competing agencies. From my perspective, however, the collaboration was not an anomaly; it was the product of commitment, confrontation, openness, and hard work on the parts of these linking agents and supervisors.

Three of the five volumes in the Series were produced from the Research Component of the project. They evolved from the developmental work of Dennis Collins, acting in collaboration with the research directors of the other six RDU projects. It was this early developmental work that gave shape to the linker's documentation procedures and influenced the variables ultimately reported on in the three publications.

Responsibility for the conceptualization of the school-level studies, Case Studies in Program Improvement, fell to Barry Gold who developed the framework for the studies with case writers Elliott Krause of Northeastern University; Ruth Anne Olson, a private consultant; and John Nickel, Wichita State University. Case research and preparation was also done by Alfred Wilson from Kansas State University and Mary Smith, another private consultant. The cases were designed to describe the project in its first two years at the site. At the end of the third year, epilogues of each case and a cross-case themes chapter were developed by Terrence E. Deal, Holly Gunner, and Martha Stone Wiske of the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

In editing the school-level studies, Christopher J. Drew coordinated the work of eight researchers in three states and regularly mediated conflicts between the researchers and the linkers under study. I am convinced that the cases are enlightening and the cross-case analysis compelling because of his active attention to argument and style from the early drafts to the final copy.

In preparing The "Inside" Outsiders: A Study of Three Consortium Linking Agents, Dr. Beverly Loy Taylor (Center for Policy Research, New York City) inherited a partially conceived conceptual framework, a great deal of already collected data, and an incredibly tight timeline. Rather than complain, she dug in: tightened the framework, found and filled gaps in the data through interviews, observation, and extensive document analysis, and stuck to her timeline. As project director, I was pleased with her thoroughness; as a professional, I am impressed with her monograph.

Chris Drew also conducted his own research within the project. His publication, The Consortium Project: A Study of Interagency Collaboration, is a description and analysis of the project itself and is based on his observations of the project in action. His interviews of me, conducted at intervals throughout the project, I found to be thought-provoking and professionally challenging. What he was able to use as data, I was able to take as feedback, and I believe that both of us benefitted from the interactions. I certainly did.

Two project central staff took responsibility for providing several types of resources to linking agents. Peter Gardner and Susan Harris planned training events, conducted meetings, circulated information, and provided ongoing contact with the linkers. Their early work, providing resources related to specific aspects of the linker's role, created the prototype Linking Agent's Tool Kit, a collection of articles and resources. John J. Ford, III and Leslie Hergert accepted the responsibility to make the Tool Kit more generic. In the process, they have considerably upgraded the original set of resources and have added important substantive comments on the linker's role.

The Reflections book is our attempt to let project staff tell their own story. In addition to the story that unfolds, the articles also demonstrate that linking agents, like any group of practitioners, can play an important role in developing and sharing understandings about their experience. The writers

represented in the book deserve credit for their willingness to think about their experiences and put forth their own analyses for public consideration and scrutiny. In editing the book I was fortunate to have the benefit of the editorial skill of Joan Wilson who worked directly with the paper writers on matters of clarity and style.

The Consortium has relied on the administrative support of a number of people over its three year history including Claire Durocher, Nina Demeritt, Nancy Lund, and Zeina Azzam, who had the massive task of coordinating production of this series. In addition, we have had extensive technical support from Paula McCarron and David Pelletier of The NETWORK's Product Development Division, and from Richard Emery, a free-lance graphic artist.

I would also like to thank Thomas S. Israel of the National Institute of Education for his support throughout the life of the program and for his responsiveness and flexibility at times when our problems had no apparent solution.

One final note on the subject of contributors to the welfare of the project: in addition to the counsel and commentary of the aforementioned people, I have also had ongoing access to David P. Crandall, Executive Director of The NETWORK, who from the start of the project has made available his professional knowledge of research utilization and his experience in project management. His support has been invaluable and his influence on me over the years has been profound. I can only hope that the reports in this Series will reflect his high standards and his tireless quest to make NETWORK publications a contribution to the future, not a rationalization of the past.

For those of us who have lived with The Consortium since 1976, the Consortium Report Series will be, no doubt, the tip of the iceberg. We just couldn't get it all into print, and in truth, we didn't try. However, I believe that we've been honest with ourselves -- that we've not invented a tip of a make-believe iceberg -- and hope that there will be a great deal in these publications that others will find of use.

Richard C. Harris, Ph.D.
Project Director

INTRODUCTION

Background

The papers in this volume represent our attempt to capture the experiences of six local school improvement efforts. The school sites described were chosen from the thirty comprising the Consortium project's pool of target schools and they represent a mix of urban, suburban, and rural districts in three of the project's six states. (The names of these states, of the target schools, districts and linking agencies, and of all individuals involved have either been changed or omitted from the studies.)

Assisting in school improvement efforts has been the major concern of The NETWORK for over ten years. In our experience, and that of others, change and improvement in schools is a complex and often unpredictable endeavor whether it is focused on the school's curriculum, organizational structure and practices, personnel policies, or instructional and technical approaches -- and all of these have been amply addressed through past and current improvement projects.

Much interest and work of late has been devoted to improvement through the introduction of proven practices into schools;* this approach has the obvious virtue of saving repeated developmental efforts and was at the core of the Consortium's Research and Development Utilization project. An assumption underlying this approach is that with all the federal, state, and local support given to program development in the last decade, there very likely exist appropriate solutions to many educational problems. National, regional, and local validation procedures have been developed to insure the merit of programs to be exported, offering an additional measure of confidence to this approach. What had been lacking was effective client information and delivery systems to accomplish the link between needs and resources, but this lack is being addressed by federal and state supported dissemination and diffusion projects in all parts of the country. These serve as the agents of exchange and are credited with facilitating thousands of program adoptions in the last five years.

This approach to program improvement has spawned its own brand of assessments and investigations. In our experience, however, much research on school improvement has focused primarily on the outcomes of the program adoption process and often ends up making judgments about programs that were incompletely or incorrectly

*Emrick, J.A. and Peterson, S.M. A Synthesis of Findings Across Five Recent Studies in Educational Dissemination and Change, Far West Laboratory, San Francisco, 1978.

implemented. Therefore, it seemed right and good to us that NIE's R&D Utilization Program stressed examining every stage of this adoption process -- problem identification, examination of alternative solutions (i.e., curricular programs), and selection, initial adoption, and full implementation of the appropriate solution -- in addition to assessing the effect or outcome of the process.

The steps in this curricular improvement process serve as a focus for the following case studies, along with the other central features of the Consortium project and the overall RDU program: the presence of an outside linking agent facilitating the change process; the reliance on a pool of proven practices for program improvement; and the formation of a local decision making group.

Development of this Book

Midway through the Consortium's first of three years, prototype case studies were developed; these served as the basis for the format used in the present studies. At the beginning of Year Two, under the supervision of Barry Gold of The NETWORK, three researchers were hired to develop a conceptual framework, to collect data through three days of on-site observations and interviews each month over an eight-month period, and to write case studies of their findings. Each of these researchers -- Ruth Anne Olson, Elliott Krause, and John Nickel (who died in the spring of 1978 and was replaced by Alfred Wilson) -- conducted investigations in two schools in the assigned state, prepared regular field notes and summaries, met three times throughout the year to develop the framework and share findings, and wrote interim and final case studies.

In the spring of 1979, close to the end of the Consortium's third and final year, we engaged Terrence E. Deal, Holly Gunner, and Martha Stone Wiske to conceptualize and conduct follow-up investigations in each of the six original case study sites and to prepare epilogue reports on these. Additionally, Deal, Gunner and Wiske, analyzed all six original case studies and epilogues and developed a cross-case themes chapter.

The case studies and epilogues were organized around a framework that included the following variables: the local community context; the school environment; the problem-solving process; the reading programs examined and the one chosen for adoption; and the central participants in the case including the linking agent, the school principal and staff members, and community representatives. In any one situation, different variables among these assumed importance to the researcher and, therefore, may have received greater emphasis than other variables. The conceptual framework was designed to guide, not to constrain, inquiry; our intention was to achieve some consistency in the issues examined in case studies and epilogues but not to have them all follow identical outlines. Happily, the result appears to be similar explorations into often vastly different situations, yielding unique but related reports.

Organization of the Book

The case studies and epilogues, organized by state, are followed by the Deal, Gunner and Wiske chapter entitled, "Linking Knowledge to Schools: The Process of Change in Six Sites." Although the final chapter is built upon the findings in the case studies and epilogues, it is meant to stand on its own as an analysis of school improvement efforts. Some readers might find it helpful to read this final analytical chapter first as an orientation to the descriptive pieces; others will want to reverse this order, working from front to back through each of the case studies and epilogues, gaining their own accumulating understanding before approaching the final chapter.

In whatever way this volume is read, it is intended to be informative, interesting and entertaining. It was impossible for our authors to be aware of and include in their papers every issue or detail from their sites, but I believe their work has captured central and telling elements of the six school improvement efforts.

Christopher J. Drew
Editor
The NETWORK, Inc.
November, 1979.

MITCHELL AND CRAMER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOLS

CASE STUDY BY: Ruth Anne Olson
895 23 Avenue S.E.
Minneapolis, Minnesota

EPILOGUE TO CASE STUDY BY: Holly Gunner
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Case Study of Mitchell and Cramer Junior High Schools

MITCHELL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Mitchell Junior High School is located in a suburban community of 35,000 people built throughout rolling river hills in the upper Midwest. The students who attend Mitchell come from families with above-average incomes, living in homes which range from $40,000 to $100,000. The community includes many airline employees and middle-management employees of several nearby computer companies.

In the view of two administrators, the general educational climate of the district in the past was one of hiring the best talent available and then allowing the individuals to create good curriculum and programs. A primary pressure on the district decision makers used to be to construct buildings to keep up with the increasing population of the district. That has changed. The district of 11,000 students is now increasing enrollment at less than 1/2 of one percent a year. The result is a concern for staff reductions and for tightening programs. The superintendent has identified curriculum coordination and articulation to be target areas for the district for a two or three year period. The individual creativity of teachers must now be subsumed under the more important goal of uniformity.

The general pattern of the district has been to make decisions via committee recommendations to the Board of Education. The teachers and administrators who were interviewed for this study generally agreed that the formation of those recommendations has often involved minimal communication with the staff of the district -- including those departments who will be directly affected by decisions. One administrator stated, "By the time others hear of recommendations, committee members already have too much ego involvement in them to be able to back off."

A major focus of attention during the 1977-1978 school year has been contract negotiations between the district and the teachers' union. As of this writing in May, 1978, the contract for the current school year has not been agreed upon. Though tensions which mounted visibly during the year seem to have reached a plateau as negotiations entered arbitration, one central office administrator perceives that the starting of school in September, 1978 might well be delayed by a strike.

II. MITCHELL JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Students and Climate

Mitchell is a circular building constructed in 1966 currently serving 1,281 students in grades seven through nine. It is one of two junior high schools in the district. Minority enrollment is less than 1%. The school does not receive Title I funds.

A student's day is divided into periods of approximately 48 minutes with some classes taught in 22-minute modules. The end of class periods is not marked by the traditional school bell. Instead, music is played in the halls to signal the time for students to pass from one class to another. Art work is tastefully displayed in entry halls, and important locations are labelled in three languages. Thus, the teachers' lounge is marked by a sign, "Professors, Professeurs, Lehrer" and the water fountains, "Aqua, Eau, and Wasser."

The school is a friendly place and people appear to take pride in making the visitor feel welcome. In the school office parents, students and staff are greeted by name and the day's announcements over the public address system most often carry a happy birthday wish for at least one student or staff person.

Organization and Staff

The school is administered by a principal and two assistant principals. The teaching staff is divided into interdisciplinary areas first organized in 1973. The intent was to streamline departments and to break down some of the traditional barriers between them. The areas include English language arts/foreign languages, home economics/industrial arts, math/science, and art/music. Each area is staffed with an area leader. At one time the area leaders served an evaluative and curriculum development function, but in recent years they have become a part of the teaching unit.

In the opinion of the principal, the area structure has not been effective. "There is, in fact, retrenchment to traditional department lines. In the English/foreign language area, for example, foreign language people resent the fact that the area leader is an English teacher. They say that person is not empathic to their problems and doesn't speak for foreign language concerns.

The Mitchell staff includes 65 teachers, a nurse, 2.5 counselors, .4 time of a school psychologist, and .5 time

of a speech clinician. Thirty-seven members of the staff have academic degrees beyond a bachelor's. The basic teaching schedule includes teaching five of the seven periods of the day.

Innovations in Language Arts

Prior to the 1976-1977 school year, curricular innovations in language arts were primarily carried out through individual teacher initiative. For example, individual teachers developed mini-courses for ninth graders covering such topics as video production, script writing, and individual reading. One teacher developed a course in study skills which was required of all seventh graders. The same teacher developed remedial reading classes.

During 1976-1977 the English staff worked together on curricular projects, working in concert for the first time. They worked on two projects: a spelling curriculum and the Consortium Project. During 1977-1978 the staff also became involved in coordination of curriculum with the other junior high school in the district. That process has resulted in a unified adoption of a grammar textbook from the Heath Junior High Language Arts Textbook Series and the Signal Language Arts Series, a literature and reading series published by Scott-Foresman.

III. THE CONSORTIUM READING PROJECT

Initial Involvement**

Mitchell Junior High became involved with the Consortium in the spring of 1976. As the school principal remembers, Mitchell got into the Consortium "purely by accident." Two years earlier he had learned about the National Diffusion Network program and he had contacted the people working with that program. In the spring of 1976 one of those people called him to tell him that there was a possibility of getting some money for reading programs and to ask the principal if people at Mitchell would be interested in being included. The principal recalls that he told her, "Sure! We're always interested in getting money." As he recalls, he had 24 hours in which to write a brief need and statistics statement and within a very few days they received notification that the project was funded.

** The reader should be aware of the limited data sources for this and for the following section of the report. Data collection procedures are described in the Appendix.

In August, 1976, the Consortium linking agent met with the district language arts coordinator to discuss Mitchell's involvement in the Consortium. The coordinator had previously been the area leader for language arts/foreign languages at Mitchell and he was pleased with the potential involvement in the Consortium. He had long been interested in including reading as part of the language arts curriculum and he saw the Consortium as a way of adding to the skills and knowledge of the teachers. He cautioned the linking agent, however, that the Consortium Decision Making Group process (DMG) would not fit the working style at Mitchell -- primarily in regard to any attempt to involve parents. He said that the only parents who get involved in school affairs in that district are the ax-grinders, and that their inclusion in the DMG would not be helpful. He did suggest that some Board of Education members might become involved as they are particularly interested in reading. He also suggested close work with the Mitchell reading teacher as he is a strong in-resident expert. Mitchell Junior High has, in fact, two reading teachers, but up to that point in time, one of those was seen as "the reading expert" because of time and experience in that position.

Shortly after that, the linking agent talked with the school principal and then with the area leader of Mitchell's language arts/foreign language staff. The principal was very optimistic about the potential of the project. The area leader pushed for an immediate presentation of actual products. Though the linking agent explained the importance of the Consortium problem identification/needs assessment process, which was to precede product selection, the area leader did not feel that such an approach would work with that staff.

The first meeting of the linking agent with the language arts staff was held in mid-September, 1976. According to the linking agent, it was a quiet meeting," and she was not very comfortable with it. She felt that the teachers were not prepared for her presentation and sensed that they felt something was being "put on them." Some teachers made it clear that they would withhold their decision to participate until after they had seen some products and that they were anxious to know which ones in the Consortium resource pool would be appropriate for secondary schools. The linking agent was aware that the decision to participate up to that point had been an administrative one and believed that some of the reluctance was the result of a lack of ownership on the part of the teachers.

Following the meeting, the linking agent met with the principal and with the district language arts coordinator. They agreed that the group was not as prepared for the

entire process as they should have been and again the two school people pushed for early presentation of products. That same day they sent a memo to the staff clarifying the school's involvement in the Consortium.

> To: Language Arts Staff, SLBP Teachers
> From: (Principal)
> Date: September 14, 1976
> Subj: "Where We Are and How We Got There" - Reading Program(s) Addressed this Morning
>
> Sometime this past spring we were contacted by _____ at the University of _____, inquiring as to our interest and possible participation in a federally funded program in language arts/reading. We were given 24 hours in which to make a decision and to develop a limited proposal. There was not time to involve the entire language arts staff, so the proposal was developed by (Lang. Arts Coordinator) , (Reading Teacher) , and me. At that point it was decided to wait until we learned whether or not we would be funded before discussing it further with you. Please understand that you have not been committed to participate without your consent.
>
> At this point we are simply sharing information with you about the programs available to us. The decision to participate as individuals is yours. The decision about which program will meet our needs is yours. Attached you will find a background letter, and more fully developed descriptions of the programs available.
>
> If, after reading this material, you have questions about the programs, or your participation, please ask them of (the linking agent) when you meet with her. Thanks for your attendance this morning. Your interest is appreciated.

The intent of this memo was clearly to calm teachers' feelings that the school leadership had gotten them into something without their knowledge. The principal and coordinator were correct in identifying this as a problem. More than a year later during interviews, many staff members voiced strong feelings about the manner of their initial involvement in the project. One teacher stated, "It definitely started out as a top-down process. No one on the staff -- no one -- knew that anything was happening

until the money was already there." The reading teacher, who had some involvement in the development of the proposal itself, said, "You have to understand how we got into this thing in the first place. Those in power sent for materials on 6-7 reading programs, and then they asked me for some information." A third teacher, when asked about how the school got involved in the first place answered, "The principal committed the department before we ever heard of it. It was a backward way of doing things. How do you commit somecne without having the commitment of those being committed?"

Linking agent contact reports (descriptive accounts written by the linking agent following each contact with the school) tell of more telephone conversations with department and school leadership in which they continued to press the linking agent to bring products. Linking agent contact reports described repeated warnings from staff members including phrases such as not wanting to "waste time," making sure that meetings are "productive in terms of content," and that the "staff mustn't get turned off early in the project." The linking agent reported that she was being pushed to move through the process much faster than she was willing.

A contradiction exists on this point. School leaders were apparently pushing the linking agent to move quickly to the product examination and selection stage. During interviews with teachers in January, 1978, people sang high praises of the linking agent, but virtually everyone voiced a complaint about the early stages of the process. As one teacher said, "She was leading us down paths to programs before people even knew what our problems were." Another said, "She went too fast for us at first. Every time we turned around she had a new program to show us before we even identified problems." The administrative leaders insisted that the teachers believed they should have been given more time to work through a process of determining reading problems in the school before they were expected to look at particular reading products.

Problem Identification

The next meeting of the language arts staff with the linking agent was held October 7, 1976, two weeks after the initial meeting. This meeting was structured to begin focusing the staff on problem identification. The contact report reveals the linking agent's discomfort with the general direction of the meeting. She believes that forty-five minutes was too short a time to get at the group concerns, and was concerned about absence of parents in the problem identification process. The linking agent had a

debriefing session with the principal, the area leader and the language arts coordinator following the larger meeting. The group considered ways to arrange for longer meetings and the language arts coordinator expressed concerns about the effect on group discussion of the presence of an outsider, i.e., the linking agent. After some discussion, the linking agent agreed that she would not attend meetings in the near future stating that this might help teachers build ownership in the program, but asked to be kept informed about their direction.

The linking agent was nervous about the decision to exclude her. She could understand that an outsider has a definite effect on the working of any group, but she also felt responsibility for the process and could not be confident of carrying out that responsibility if she was not present. Opinion from the Consortium Project office added to her nervousness as they felt that she should not have agreed to stay out of the meetings. The linking agent basically believed, however, that it would only have had a negative effect on the project as a whole if she had insisted on being included.

In the meantime the linking agent interviewed teachers and summarized the results. The linking agent maintained contact with the district language arts coordinator and with the area leader. In her absence the group had been able to get beyond the points of frustration and confusion. The reading teacher had prepared information which the staff found to be helpful, and the group put together criteria for a needs assessment and decided upon a basic three-step process for implementing any reading programs:

Step 1 - Seventh grade slow learners
Step 2 - Incorporate all seventh graders, with more language experiences
Step 3 - Review and adapt program for all grades Total implementation.

Eventually they became concerned whether any of the programs from the Consortium Pool would be useful to their secondary school, but thought it might be possible to make some adaptations.

Written contact reports state that the linking agent had two concerns at this time: the possible difficulty with her ability to step back into the process now that things had gone as far as they had; and continued discomfort with the absence of parent/community involvement.

A meeting was called for November 23, 1976 to include the

linking agent -- more than a month and a half and 3 meetings after her exclusion -- with a steering committee including two reading teachers, the area leader, and five English teachers. It is important to note that, although the language arts/foreign language area includes 15 teachers, only 9 of those people spend more than half their day teaching English. Of those nine, eight were on the steering committee.

The staff had worked hard in the time that the linking agent was not there and they had produced a complex five-page statement of background and meeting proceedings. The section on background to the project includes a statement explaining the excellence of the current Mitchell reading program and the intent to enhance rather than to replace it by their involvement in the Consortium:

> First, there is now a reading program at (Mitchell) and there has been none for several years. The program is excellent in every respect. (Mitchell) language arts teachers' consideration of another reading improvement program is not to be construed in any way as a sign of deficiency or dissatisfacton with the present program. Rather, the search for another reading improvement program is to be viewed as a high complement in another way. Our intent in investigating other reading programs is to extend reading instruction into regular language arts classrooms for thos. students who will benefit from it. This has from the beginning been a goal of the existing reading program.

It was important to this group that there not be negative implications directed toward the current reading program and the people who had developed it.

The statement also contained a list of criteria (which the linking agent had no hand in developing) to be used in the selection of a reading program from the Consortium Resource Pool:

A. Clearly and completely defined scope and sequence in language stimulation and production.
B. Complement existing programs.
C. Balance stimulation of reading interest with reading instruction.
D. Validated for effectiveness.
E. Research proven most effective compared to all other reading programs of its type.
F. Contain content which addresses word attack skill development.

G. An instructional pattern which provides for introduction and reinforcement of all skills, concepts and attitudes taught.
H. Balance individualization with group instruction to the extent that the benefits of either mode are not off-set by the disadvantages of the other.
I. Provides for (1) diagnostic evaluation, (2) teaching/learning, (3) mastery evaluation and (4) re-instruction to the extent required for mastery.
J. Provide for continuous student progress.
K. Provide for the full range of teaching modalities represented in the language arts faculty and the learning modalities represented in the target student group.
L. Be efficient to implement and manage.
M. Be economically feasible to initiate and maintain.
N. Go beyond content in word attack skills.
O. Include content in conceptualization skill development -- for example; the concepts of past, present and future time.
P. Include vocabulary development content.
Q. Contain high interest materials and activities suitable for (Mitchell's) 7th, 8th and 9th grade students.
R. Appropriate for students between SLBP -- grade level range.
S. Train language arts staff to be reading teachers.

Program Selection

Between December 15, 1976 and February 22, 1977, the steering committee met four times. They developed a grid relating the above-listed criteria to seven specific programs which the linking agent identified as being relevant to those criteria. (The linking agent applied three specific criteria in selecting the seven programs to be judged in relation to that grid. Her initial screening identified programs which (1) have been used and found to be successful in secondary schools, (2) were not considered "pull out" programs, that is they taught reading within the student's regular classroom setting rather than placing the student in a special class, and (3) were appropriate for the regular English teacher to teach. She told the steering committee that there were, in fact, more reading programs in the resource pool and that they were allowed to reject all seven if they believed that to be appropriate. In that case, she would return to the resource pool and try again.)

Teachers divided the information available on those seven projects, and each person examined one program in detail, completing the grid and reporting to the rest of the committee. Contact reports for these four meetings report

dissatisfaction with the amount and quality of information which was available about the programs. By February 22, they had narrowed their choices to two: Vocational Reading Power (VRP) and Model Intensive Reading Plan (MIRP) (a pseudonym). The reading teacher strongly favored VRP. Another teacher particularly liked MIRP but was concerned about finding junior high replication sites where they could see the program in action.

The linking agent felt the need to get as much information as possible about each program. The MIRP developer gave her the names of secondary schools where the program was implemented. She also provided the linking agent with information regarding MIRP training, costs and follow-up consulting.

The linking agent contacted sites in Council Bluffs, Iowa; Napoleon, Michigan; and Dawsin, Nebraska. She spoke with the principal of a high school where teachers had received MIRP training and shared the resulting information with the Mitchell steering committee. The principal had been rather strong in voicing the limitations of the MIRP program. "Frankly, we are having difficulty in adopting part of it. MIRP requires a lot of work, so much work that I am not sure it is appropriate for public schools. Research for the mastery learning approach used by MIRP is sound, but I am not sure that it is sound for the psychological make-up of secondary students. MIRP does not allow for the feeling among some secondary teachers that they still want to do their thing."

At the next steering committee meeting the linking agent placed a conference call to another adoption site in New Hampshire. The New Hampshire teacher with whom they spoke was excited about what she was doing and urged Mitchell people to come and visit. She was a regular classroom techer and was able to answer questions regarding modifications of MIRP in a regular classroom, problems with class scheduling, testing in the regular class, etc. She established a high level of credibility with Mitchell teachers who concluded that this was a possible solution to their problem.

The linking agent also pursued information regarding VRP. She spoke with teachers in Wilmington, Delaware, in Evanston, Illinois, and in Platville, Wisconsin. She arranged conference calls for the Mitchell steering committee to talk with these people and tried to get information about possible site visitations for Mitchell people. Staffs of schools refused such visitations on the grounds that either it would be late in the school year before a visit could be arranged or because they did not believe that they, themselves, were far enough along in

their implementation of the VRP program for observations to be beneficial. The linking agent summarized information about both MIRP and VRP.

In May, 1977, two teachers, including the second reading teacher, visited an MIRP site in Somersworth, New Hampshire where they saw the program in action in both an elementary and a secondary classroom. They were impressed and reported so to the rest of the staff. By the time school was out in June, the staff had made a decision to adopt MIRP.

In retrospect, the staff recalls several reasons for the decision to choose MIRP over VRP. Most influential seems to have been the fact that they were unable to see the VRP program in action. Several people reported that they were generally unwilling to adopt a program that they hadn't been able to see and to react to personally. Additionally, the name of the reading program, Vocational, made some people uncomfortable. The information which they had about the program was entirely built around vocational vocabulary and they could not see before them adaptations into a general curriculum. Some teachers also felt it was too narrowly focused on vocabulary, whereas MIRP dealt much more broadly with other aspects of a language arts curriculum

The rejection of VRP was clearly against the wishes of the more experienced reading teacher. He strongly favored that program over MIRP and believed that some of the materials which he had developed would have fit nicely with it. In spite of the power of his role early in the Consortium process, the steering committee rejected the program which he strongly supported in favor of another program which he did not believe to be practical. (Following this, the reading teacher became quite inactive in the steering committee. By the winter of 1977-78, he attended occasional meetings, but did not participate in the work of the committee.)

Training and Implementation

Initial Training. Having identified the reading program to be adopted, MIRP, the next step was to determine the nature of the training to be received. Consideration was given to sending several people to an extensive three-week summer training session, but the principal believed it to be unwise to focus so much money on so few people. Instead, the reading teacher who had visited the MIRP school in New Hampshire and the area leader attended a one-week training session during the summer.

As soon as school started in September, plans were made for training the entire staff; an MIRP trainer was brought in for five days training in mid-October. The principal arranged for reserve teachers in order that every teacher who was interested could attend at least part of that five days. One of the eight people on the original steering committee was no longer on the Mitchell staff by the fall of 1977. Of the remaining seven, six people were involved in this training session. One teacher attended one day, two attended three days, and three teachers attended the entire five days of training. The teacher who had attended the summer training did not attend because of special circumstances in her classroom that week.

Initial Implementation. Seven teachers, then, had received a combined total of 32 days of training either during the summer or during mid-October, 1977. By late December, when the case study researcher arrived on the scene, people had had mixed experience with implementing the program within classrooms. Four teachers reported that they had actually tried it. The teacher who had gone to the summer workshop said that she had used it a great deal in the fall, "But," she said, "it takes a lot of preparation and I just haven't done anything with it since then." Another teacher described having gone through seven weeks of vocabulary work with it and felt that it had been used with good success. "The kids took it well...at first. Then, they tired of it quickly as it was just tough for them to sustain the routine. But they did learn the words by the end of that time." "It's impressive, " he said, "but it requires a tremendous amount of time. You have to remember that it was designed for elementary classrooms of 30 kids, not for secondary with 150 kids in one day. There is no way of keeping up with the massive amount of paperwork involved in the recordkeeping."

A third teacher, when asked where she was in terms of MIRP answered with feeling, "FRUSTRATED. I've used two units, and I think it's great. But, I just don't have the time. There is so much to be developed...so much to be done. When can I do all that work?"

The area leader reported that he had tried a little of it once, but he didn't believe the kids would ever tolerate being saturated with it.

Though they had not gone far in implementing it, the staff generally spoke of the method with high praise. "The advantage of it," reported the area leader, "is that kids are physically forced to enter the process. When they're

sitting there listening or sitting there reading, you can't know for sure where their minds are. In this method, though, they're forced to be involved. I suppose it could become a mindless thing. But maybe even that's okay. Maybe that's what vocabulary and spelling are anyway."

The teacher who had used it extensively with vocabulary said, "I'm definitely impressed with it as a method. It provides clearly stated goals, is highly organized, and it appears to have results." Another teacher used it with a unit on character development in literature. When asked how students reacted to it she said, "They thought I was kidding at first. All those responses really struck them funny. But then they really liked it."

The teacher who was most convinced of its value and most committed to its development at this point in time was the second of the two reading teachers. By mid-winter of 1977-78, she was given a primary leadership role in managing the work with MIRP and communications with the linking agent. She saw MIRP as being a much more satisfying way of teaching, in contrast to supervising students' use of SRI or other materials of that nature. She said that instead of just putting a list of vocabulary words on the board and telling kids to learn them for the next day, she now has a method for actually teaching those words and knowing that students will learn them. When asked about the particulars of the method, she replied, "The script? Oh, everyone is deviating from that. That's the first thing you have to do, even though the training puts pressure on you to do it exactly one way." (I observed only one class in which the teachers used MIRP for even 10 minutes straight and that involved many modifications of the MIRP script.) It would be accurate to say that Mitchell teachers never intended to reproduce all aspects of the program exactly as prescribed. The teachers believed that some aspects of MIRP were exciting and would be valuable teaching tools. They also believed, however, that implementation would require far more preparation time than they had.

Trainer Demonstrations. Though teachers were not reporting regular use of MIRP in their classrooms, their interest in the program was evident. But they were frustrated. They liked the method. They believed it had potential for doing great things, but they simply could not see that they had the resources to implement what they had learned.

The linking agent was well aware of this frustration and began to work on two fronts to keep interest alive and to provide a way out of the woods. She began arrangements for a demonstrator-trainer to spend two days at the school in order to demonstrate in the classrooms the techniques in

which teachers had particular interest and she began exploring ways of providing time for teachers to develop the necessary materials and units.

The teachers were interested in the possibility of demonstrations. They were very clear in saying that they were not themselves sufficiently comfortable with or knowledgeable about MIRP to be willing to be observed by the trainer, but they definitely did want to observe someone else in action. The principal was willing to provide reserve teachers and the staff people themselves were willing to do some shifting of classes in order to make it easier for them to observe demonstrations in each others' classrooms.

The demonstrator moved with a whirlwind quality from classroom to classroom for two days, February 9 and 10, 1978. With five minutes to prepare between classes, she taught study skills, grammar, vocabulary, writing and punctuation. At a meeting with the teachers following the first day of demonstrations, some commented that they found it exciting to watch the method in action, though they continued to have concerns about how they would ever find the time to learn it all. One teacher reported that some of her students had said that a lot of it was babyish. Basically, the demonstrator was able to bring to the staff a sense of the reality of MIRP in a secondary setting. She is herself a secondary teacher who uses MIRP, who is enthusiastic about it, and who could talk about some of the modifications of the method which are necesary for use with adolescents.

Prior to the demonstrator, two Mitchell teachers tried implementing MIRP. Following the demonstrations, these two and three more teachers tried using the methods. One teacher reported using techniques of unison reading, of timed silent reading, and of selecting a few vocabulary words which are key to that day's work and teaching them via MIRP. Another teacher reported using MIRP concepts of proofreading and adapting the methods of timed reading and unison reply. Observations in classrooms showed that two teachers were using some of the methods. In one case the teacher taught a 22-minute vocabulary lesson, using modifications of MIRP for that entire time. In another case, the teacher incorporated the timed reading and student-reward system of "stars and smileys" at several points in a grammar lesson from Warriner's.

Continued Uncertainty in Implementation. February through April was a time of great variation in people's opinions about the Consortium Project. By this time, the one reading teacher had virtually dropped out of the project. He was generally discouraged by the district decision to

change from a requirement to an elective the instructional skills course which he had developed several years earlier and had taught ever since. He, and others, saw that decision as being inconsistent: to begin to emphasize the basic skill of reading yet at the same time to eliminate another basic of instructional skills. This reading teacher reported, "I'm sitting and watching this thing as an outsider now. MIRP is just so demanding that people won't use it. If it weren't for all the outsiders -- the linking agent, the case study researcher -- MIRP would be gone long before now." He believes that Vocational Reading Power, the program which was rejected in favor of MIRP, would have been longer lasting and would have fit better into the general curriculum which was already in place. He does not regard the entire Consortium process to have been a waste; however, he believes the original goal was to get language arts teachers in tune with teaching reading. "Teachers have learned word analysis, and that's good. But how much money has been spent compared to the level of utilization?"

In March, the principal was also discouraged about how things were going. "We are at a stalemate. The greatest enthusiasm and involvement was during the first six or nine months that we were in the project. People were busy searching out, taking excursions, making conference calls to find out about programs. Now they have found that there is no panacea in MIRP."

The language arts coordinator for the school district who had been involved in the first few months of the project was hearing that people were not implementing MIRP in spite of the training and demonstrations. He hypothesized several reasons for that. "A primary reason may be that the burdens of this particular program are too great." Other reasons he named were external to the program, but were related to escalating discontent because of the unsettled teachers' contract, the Board of Education decision that teachers will teach six out of seven classes in the school day next year instead of the five out of seven that they teach currently. "This is just a lousy time to ask anyone to do anything but mind the store." But he believed that the lull should not be interpreted as defeat. Good things had resulted already. He believed that the process had eliminated the junior high teachers' usual frame of mind that someone else is teaching reading, and that the Mitchell language arts staff now accept reading as something that they have to worry about.

"The instructional skills decision is also part of that. The result of that decision is that the reading program will be diminished at the junior high. Half of the students who would have been required to take reading will

no longer even have it available to them. This might well result in a reassessment. It might well contribute to the inclusion of reading in language arts classes." Though he was discouraged about the low level of implementation of MIRP this central office administrator saw potential for the particular method, and saw value in what had happened even to that point in time. This was a time of great professional insecurity for many of the teachers. Staff was being cut, transfers could have been made from Mitchell to the senior high, and many of the staff did not know whether they would have jobs for the next year, or if they did where they would be. The reading teacher who had been most enthusiastic and who had assumed a major leadership role was lowest on the seniority list and for several weeks faced the high probability of losing her job for 1978-1979. Several people voiced doubt about the future of MIRP at Mitchell if she left. Another teacher reported that she had started developing vocabulary materials but was then told that she would be at the senior high next year. "There's no point in developing any more materials now, though of course I'll leave behind what I've done already."

Time for Development of Materials. Though discouraged by the problems, the linking agent moved ahead in developing options for providing teachers with time to develop materials and units. She met several times with the language arts coordinator, the area leader and the principal and was able to offer choices to the teachers including:

- release time from the classroom to work on material preparation,
- summer compensated time,
- graduate credit from a local college, or
- hiring clerical help to prepare the actual charts once teachers had determined the content.

(Eventually, all teachers selected summer compensated time.)

At the time of this writing, June 1978, many decisions have been made. The one reading teacher who had opted out of the MIRP project will be going to the senior high to teach reading next year. The area leader will also be at the senior high. The second reading teacher will remain at Mitchell as will all of the other teachers who have been active in the project. One of those people, however, will be teaching half time, with most of that time going to teaching Spanish classes. Another teacher who has been primarily in the guidance department will be teaching

English classes next year. She has followed the MIRP project with much interest during this school year and intends to participate in training and/or materials development the summer of 1978.

The elimination of some of the insecurity has been a major motivator for people to plan the next steps. Another motivating factor was the Statewide Consortium Conference held in April. Mitchell people saw their own role in the Consortium in relation to other schools. They perceived that they were as far along in implementing a program as any of the other schools and agreed among themselves that they were certainly more organized than anyone else. These feelings of success gave them a shot-in-the-arm to move ahead.

Plans now are for teachers to spend approximately three full days this summer in materials and unit preparation, for which they will be paid the regular district workshop stipend. Seven teachers plan to participate in that workshop, including the area leader who will be teaching in the senior high next year.

The Future of MIRP. At this point in time people are enthusiastic and hopeful for the future. Teachers have expressed willingness to shift their own summer plans in order to arrange for the three-day workshop.

The principal says, "I'm buoyed right now. I had been very negative as I kept seeing that people were just too busy to do what had to be done. But I've been observing in classes lately, and I've seen the techniques in use. People have tried them. They've worked. They're learning to integrate them." He would like to see more people use it, but knows that not all will. His candid opinion is that three of the six teachers who will remain at Mitchell will make good use of the techniques. He is less sure that two of the people will use them and guesses that one will not. He has an eye toward expansion of the program into the social studies area and has already explored the possibility with one teacher and with that area leader. They are both receptive.

The principal would like to see Mitchell become a dissemination site for others in the district: namely the second junior high and the senior high. Toward that end the area leader who will be teaching at the senior high next year can serve as a valuable link, a role which he agrees to presently. The area leader also believes that the reading teacher who will be going to the senior high, though he has not been an advocate of MIRP at Mitchell, will be a firm supporter of the program.

The district language arts coordinator believes that the

future of MIRP at Mitchell may well be dependent upon the involvement of teachers at the second junior high school. Coordination of curriculum between the two junior highs is a district priority right now, and though it is still an open question whether that must include coordination at the level of methods such as MIRP, pressure for that is clearly felt. That might be a problem if it means that either both junior highs use MIRP or that neither is allowed to use it. One teacher from the other junior high school did go to Mitchell to observe the MIRP demonstrator, and she reacted very negatively to what she saw. Strong attention may need to be given to this issue.

IV. DECISION MAKING ROLES

The Linking Agent

Several people have volunteered comments about the role of the linking agent in the Consortium process at Mitchell. "She faced a very difficult situation here," reported one teacher. "First of all, it was the principal's unilateral decision that we would be involved. And this is not a staff who is easily convinced. We need a clear demonstration of advantage -- it must be rational and justifiable -- and people generally remain skeptics for a while. The linking agent was an agent of change amongst a group of people who were asking why we even wanted to change. But she did it. She kept us moving. She was dependable, helpful, and kept us on task. She set deadlines and succeeded in giving us reason for meeting them."

The teacher who has been given a leadership role in the school for managing the process said, "I absolutely could not say enough for her. She has done everything we could possibly ask," and others, including the principal and the district language arts coordinator, echoed this sentiment. One person summarized, "She brought us materials, connected us with people and projects, prodded us along, and kept us on track. She is very good at what she does."

Administrators

The role of the principal has been an important one beginning with the resentment which people felt toward the "top down" process of becoming involved in the first place. Since that time the principal has been seen as being generally supportive of the process, by dropping in on meetings, arranging for release time for teachers to meet and to attend training, and informally letting people

know that he is interested in where they go with it.

Some teachers, however, have felt a frustration because he has not taken a more active stand. (After November, 1976 the principal stayed in the background. While he would sometimes drop in on meetings, he chose to let things happen as they would, without his interference. He reported in various interviews that he would sometimes ask the reading teacher or the area leader about the progress of the project and his own opinions were based on what they said about it. Since one of those two people was definitely opposed to MIRP, the principal's opinion was strongly influenced in that direction.) As one teacher said, "He has been very cooperative when I asked for something, but he's never come out and said that he thinks people should use the methods more. More people would use it if the administration would actually make a recommendation that they do so." The area leader expressed uncertainty at one point about the opinion of the principal about the actual program selected, and another teacher said, "Rumor has it that (principal) doesn't really like the program we chose, though he's never said that for sure."

The principal himself recognizes that a firmer stand might have been wise. In March, when he described the project as being at a stalemate, he was asked whether, in retrospect, he would have done anything differently. "Definitely," he answered. "We've made it too easy. We should have said, 'Do it or forget it! Buy in or get out!' As it is we held out a brass ring for people to grab and then allowed them to stand and toss it up and down idly."

He was not convinced, however, that the pushing should have been his own responsibility. When asked who should have done that, he replied, "(the area leader) would be the logical one. Or the linking agent."

In recent months the principal has been in a very crucial position of helping to manipulate decisions about who will stay at Mitchell during the next school year, who will go to the senior high, and who will be assigned as area leader for next year. Though the future of the Consortium Project could not, by any means, be the only factor in those decisions, the life or death of that project at Mitchell and its potential expansion into the senior high is clearly dependent upon which teachers are in what positions. The principal says that has been a definite factor in his planning, and the decisions that have been made appear to be advantageous to the project.

The language arts coordinator is a district-wide administrator who has been involved in the Consortium

Project since its beginnings. His interest stems from his former position as a Mitchell English teacher and area leader and, as the person now responsible for K-12 language arts curriculum in the district, he sees himself, and the linking agent and other teachers see him, as being interested in and supportive of the project. In the beginning, he actively attended meetings and encouraged participation. When the steering committee was formed in November, 1976, he chose to step back and view the process from a distance, keeping in contact with both the linking agent and the principal in order to keep informed of the progress. He actively re-entered the picture by attending a meeting in March, 1978. This was a rather critical time as many decisions were being made about teacher placements and assignments for the next school year. It is impossible to know for sure, but his show of support at this meeting seemed to be an important impetus for making decisions.

The Teachers

The primary decision makers in this project are the teachers. The memo to the staff following the August, 1976, meeting states clearly that individuals have the right to make their own decisions regarding participation and, in fact, some chose to participate and others did not. The decision regarding the actual program selection was made by teachers. All indications are that though they have been dependent upon others for information and support, they have known both by explicit statement and by emotional ownership that the project generally, and each decision specifically, is theirs.

CRAMER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

I. THE CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

River City is a city in the midst of a seven-county urban area in the upper Midwest. The city's population of approximately 400,000 regularly receives news of urban problems, of metropolitan government, public transportation, construction of a new sports stadium, and general issues of quality of life. The schools are making more than the normal amount of news during the spring of 1978.

As with many urban districts, this city's schools face budget problems created by a declining enrollment, inflation, and increasing numbers of programs mandated by the state and federal governments. They also face stiff requirements for desegregation and have been under court order since 1972 to meet defined percentages for both students and staff. Quality of education is, of course, an ever-present issue.

History of Innovation

Alternatives. In the past the school district has faced those demands with considerable creativity and an eye toward innovation. In 1971, for example, the district began implementation of a city-wide plan for alternative education. The basic format of the plan was to provide choice of programs for every elementary child. By 1977, though the choices were not yet equally available throughout the district, they included as many as five distinct styles of programs, ranging from fundamental schools to free schools. The system of alternatives was designed to facilitate two goals: quality education and desegregation.

Quality of Education. The alternatives spoke directly to issues of quality of education. Arguments in the early 1970s about humane education and in the late 1970s about back to the basics could be carried on constructively and with a minimum of antagonism as people, including staff, students and parents, were allowed and encouraged to decide what kind of education they deemed to be best for them and then to contribute to the quality of that style of program.

Desegregation/Integration. The development of alternative programs was a major tool in the district's goal of desegregation. Leaving one's neighborhood school became a desirable thing to do if the program which best fit the values and life style of the child and the family was

located a little further away. By careful planning of where to put particular programs, desegregation in many parts of the city was achieved by peaceful, voluntary means.

Even so, by 1975 the federal judge who retained jurisdiction over the district's desegregation plans ruled that voluntary means could not be trusted in one section of the city, and that mandatory boundary lines must be drawn in order to lower the minority percentages in some schools. And in May, 1978, after the school district appealed to the judge to relax percentages, the judge ruled that the percentages will remain essentially the same and that the district must be in compliance with his order in both the fall of 1978 and the fall of 1979.

Human Relations. An important component of planning in the past few years in the city's schools has been an emphasis on human relations training. Expanding on a state law which took effect in 1973, the district required human relations training in each school, to include staff, students and community as appropriate. Staff of each building was required to conduct a needs assessment and to design a plan for inservice training which would speak to the identified needs. A focus defined by the district as a whole was racism and sexism and the total program was seen as a major tool for moving from desegregation and for maintaining a high quality of education.

Decentralization. In 1974 the district implemented a decentralized administrative plan which divided the schools of the district into three geographic areas. Each area has its own area superintendent and resource staff and its own structure for making decisions affecting its own schools. Major motivations for decentralization included desegregation and easing planning with communities by reducing the scope of each administrative unit.

Community involvement, an increasingly important force prior to decentralization, has flourished under the area structure. Each area has advisory committees of staff and parents, some of which are general in focus and some of which concentrate on items such as budget recommendations or planning of alternative programs. Some schools throughout the district also maintain highly influential advisory councils which include both parents and staff.

The Place of the Consortium

One of the units of this city's schools is a teacher center which is maintained collaboratively with the local university. The roles of the Teacher Center have been

several over the years; one major function is to serve as an umbrella agency for externally-funded projects which are shaped directly to the interests of both the public schools and the university.

One of the projects housed at the Teacher Center is the Consortium. As the original Consortium proposal was being written, there was a clear desire to include a school from this city district, as it would serve the needs of the schools by providing them with a new program and would serve the needs of the Consortium by providing an urban setting in which to implement the process. Various members of the Teacher Center were working closely with a project in one of the decentralized areas and knew people and problems in many of those schools. At the time of the funding for the Consortium, there was a tentative commitment by that area to participate, but there was no decision about which particular school would be involved.

Site Selection

The search for a particular school began in August, 1976. At that time an elementary school was a prime candidate, and the linking agent spent many weeks meeting with the principal, the staff, and representatives of a Teacher Corps project which was in that school. During the preceding spring, teachers in that school had reviewed several reading programs and had selected Project Catchup as being of particular interest to them. The linking agent explored with the school and with the Consortium Project office the possibility of including that school in the project by starting with them at the point of program selection. The general opinion of the Consortium central staff stated in a contact report was, "We can't go with a site which has already chosen a program."

The school staff was also uncertain about the value of their involvement with the Consortium. After many meetings and phone calls, the principal informed the linking agent on September 23 that the staff had not expressed any opinion to him of wanting to be involved and that his opinion was, "I don't think we can take on one more thing." The decision was made to drop this school as a potential participant.

Over the next several months the linking agent met with the district Right to Read director, with the area superintendent, with the district reading and language arts coordinator, the assistant area superintendent, the state Right to Read director, the area curriculum generalist, the state Title I coordinator, and with the principals and/or staffs of six schools in that decentralized area. The area

superintendent was very supportive of the Consortium Project and was anxious to provide assistance in locating a school. The area Title I coordinator was reluctant to support the idea of using Title I money for any program adopted through the Consortium process as Title I programs must be for both math and reading and because she was generally concerned that Title I gets used too much as the source of financial support for special programs. One school sought out the Consortium and requested inclusion, but the area administration discouraged their participation as that particular school receives much attention and the area superintendent felt it was important to spread the wealth.

The principals and/or staffs of the other five schools contacted ultimately rejected involvement for a variety of reasons. Basically, people felt that they were already involved in too many things including environmental education, an intergenerational project with senior citizens, Teacher Corps, a new district-wide adoption of Ginn 720, and extensive building renovation. People did not perceive the Consortium as an opportunity to solve a pressing problem, but rather as another demand on their time.

Because of the district-wide adoption of Ginn 720 and the extensive inservice training that was required by that, several people eventually suggested to the linking agent that it might be well to look at junior high schools, rather than elementary schools.

The linking agent first contacted Cramer Junior High School in December, 1976. The Cramer principal had been on a sabbatical leave during 1974-1975 with the collaborative university/public schools Teacher Center of which the Consortium is a part. The linking agent had some knowledge of the principal. The Teacher Center and its programs had credibility with him.

The principal recalled in an interview in January, 1978, "When this program was offered to us, I jumped on it. I take all the reading help I can get." He has reason to be concerned about reading. According to the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests administered in September, 1976, 42% of the entering 7th-graders at Cramer read at 5th-grade level or below. According to the principal, 1977 testing brought that figure up to 47%. Cramer teachers are aware of these figures too. Statements volunteered during interviews include, "We're at the bottom of the barrel in reading," and "Cramer is the very lowest in the city, you know."

During January, 1977, the linking agent met with the principal, with the Cramer reading specialist and with the

English department chairperson. All three expressed interest in the project, and a meeting with the entire English department was scheduled for February 2, 1977. That meeting was attended by the Consortium linking agent and seven members of the English department. The principal was not present because of a previous commitment.

According to teachers' memories of that meeting, the linking agent introduced the Consortium Project to them and said that Cramer had been selected to participate in it. In retrospect, at least, teachers were confused about just what that meant. They clearly believed that "they had been selected to participate" and not that "they were being invited to participate." Several people assumed that the area superintendent wanted Cramer to be included because of the low reading scores. When asked whether or not they had a choice about being involved, they were not sure. Most hesitantly replied with statements like, "Well, I suppose we did," or "I never really thought about it, but I guess we could have said no if we wanted to." Written contact reports and interviews do not reveal an explicit decision by the English department. There was, instead, a clear sense of moving ahead with what needed to be done, "since we were a part of it."

II. CRAMER JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL

Staff and Students

One of five junior high schools in the decentralized area, Cramer was built in 1922. The school is administered by a principal and two assistant principals. The staff includes 35 teachers, including special education and Title I positions, two counselors, 1.4 social workers, a full-time librarian and 230 hours per week of paraprofessional time. Of the staff, two teachers, one social worker, and one assistant principal are minority group members.

With a current enrollment of approximately 590 students, the student turnover rate at Cramer during 1976-1977 was 45% compared to a district-wide rate of 26%. 65% of the Cramer students are eligible for free lunch compared to a district-wide eligibility of 36%. The minority enrollment according to the 1977-1978 sight count was 49%. Approximately 43% of the students qualify for Title I assistance, and the school received approximately $70,000 in Title I money during 1977-1978.

Climate

A great deal of attention is focused on discipline problems at Cramer. The staff initiated several projects such as

"Student of the Month" as positive motivations toward work and good behavior, and they also generally tightened rules about hall and classroom behavior. Cramer staff see their school as being a troubled place. They have become aware of increased use of and selling of drugs among students and can identify a number of physical attacks against staff, a problem which they see to be increasing in the last two years. They are well aware of the intertwining nature of learning, self concept and behavior, but are increasingly faced with the immediacy of behavior problems in contrast to the less tangible, long range nature of learning and self concept.

Special Programs

Several special programs in the school are designed to address directly the problems of behavior and school adjustment. One program enrolls approximately 30 students and is designed to reward good behavior and achievement with highly desired after-school and weekend activities. That program serves only seventh graders. Another program serves approximately 25 seventh and eigth graders by taking them out of the mainstream classroom for four hours a day in order to deal with academic and adjustment problems. A third program enrolls about 14 students. A key to that program is taking the students away from the actual school setting and providing them with educational opportunities in a learning center.

During 1977-1978 the school has employed one teacher and two teacher aides with the use of CETA funds. The total staff has been involved in the design of an inservice training plan as a part of a Teacher Corps project.

Apart from the Consortium Project, Cramer has four special reading programs:

- 65 students receive assistance from an Emergency School Aid Act (ESAA) program using a Basic Skill Center Reading Program for teaching decoding and the Dorsett Reading Program for practice in comprehension.
- Approximately 150 students are enrolled in basic English classes and go to a Title I-funded reading center for one hour twice a week.
- A developmental reading program uses Ginn materials and serves approximately 50 students.
- Beginning January 9, approximately 14 students received Title I tutoring.

III. THE CONSORTIUM READING PROJECT

The Consortium linking agent first met with the total English department on February 2, 1977. At that time the English staff consisted of seven people, including a reading specialist who works with the ESAA program described above. Teachers raised a concern at that meeting regarding the number of reading programs in which the school is already involved. The reading specialist announced at the meeting that he was writing a proposal which would extend the Ginn 720 elementary program through junior high. This information, of course, heightened individuals' sense of being involved in too much. The linking agent explained that there needn't be any conflict of interest in regard to this new program, but that she would take this concern to the principal. When she did so, he said that he wasn't bothered that the teachers were concerned because the "students need as much help as they can get and that may mean seven or eight new programs."

Steps for action taken at this February 2 meeting included:

- Tentative focus on programs which could be used in regular English classes,
- Decision to invite a parent to join the committee as a parent representative,
- Scheduling of linking agent interviews with teachers.

Problem Identification

During the next two or three months the project moved ahead swiftly. The linking agent met with the area superintendent to inform him that Cramer would participate. He gave expressions of support for the project and suggested that she contact the district Title I coordinator for money to support Cramer's participation. That contact revealed considerable reluctance on the part of the coordinator to be involved in this project. She needed to know more details before she would be willing to commit resources. The linking agent decided to formulate as concrete a plan as possible describing the Consortium Project at Cramer and the cost-sharing requirements. She would also keep the area superintendent informed about the outcome of her contacts with the Title I coordinator. The linking agent recognized the sensitivity of this Title I contact. Title I was a potential source of financial support. In addition, as a member of the Cramer staff reported later, "The Cramer staff really fears the Title I

coordinator. She is a very powerful person because we depend so much on Title I funding." The principal describes the coordinator's role as being one of monitoring programs to make sure they meet guidelines, but says she does not take part in structuring programs.

The linking agent and the principal wrote a one-page statement of program needs for the Consortium Reading Project and submitted it to the coordinator along with a request for $2,558 in Title I funds to be allocated for release time for teachers, travel to demonstration sites, materials and supplies, consultants, implementation planning time and conferences. This budget, minus the travel money, was eventually approved.

The linking agent met with the reading specialist from Cramer and with the other people developing the Ginn 720 proposal which had been described at the February 2 meeting in order to get more information regarding that proposed program. As the Conortium Project had not yet identified a target group of students, it was unclear to what extent Ginn 720 and the Consortium might be working with the same students.

During the month of February, the linking agent completed teacher interviews for the Consortium and used the results as a basis for discussion at a meeting of the DMG on March 15. At that meeting, teachers pushed to begin looking at the reading programs available through the resource pool. At the same time two teachers were very excited about Scott-Foresman materials which they had learned of at a training workshop. They wanted those materials and asked if the Title I money assigned to the Consortium could be used to purchase them. The linking agent was concerned about this desire to make product decisions before adequately defining the problem, and she felt the need to slow them down.

A half-day meeting was scheduled for March 29. Title I money paid for reserve teachers, and the linking agent did the leg-work in terms of arrangements with the reserve teacher office and other details. The agenda for that meeting included a summary and discussion of the teacher surveys which the linking agent had given the teachers to complete. In the discussion teachers ranked their concerns as:

1. Poor motivation about learning
2. Teacher motivation to motivate students
3. Teacher attitude and expectations
4. Language skills

Much discussion centered around behavior problems. This was, and still is as of this writing (June 1978), a major concern of the staff. Considerable time in this meeting was spent discussing the causes of discipline problems and about the need for appropriate materials as tools for motivation. The issue of Scott-Foresman materials was raised again, and the linking agent felt a frustration that she might be communicating that she wasn't really interested in their problems unless they looked for the answers within her own pool of resources. She suggested that they might review the Scott-Foresman materials using the selection criteria which they developed through the Consortium process.

A major agenda item was a process of defining reading problems with the help of two handouts, "Defining Curricular Problems" and "Problem Statement." That process did not work well as teachers had a difficult time in writing problems. As the linking agent reflected later, "Some people don't do a very good job at that kind of thing. They were able to verbalize problems but were reluctant to focus enough to put them in writing. I didn't put a lot of pressure on them at that point." Even so, the linking agent and the teachers recall that this was a productive meeting, and they left it with a sense of where they wanted to go next. The planned next steps were for one of the teachers to contact the Scott-Foresman salesman for more information and for the linking agent to gather resource pool information for the next meeting in April.

Program Selection

During the months of April and May additional meetings of the DMG were held. Specific details of those meetings are hard to reconstruct as there are no contact reports of that period and, by the time data collection was started, individual teachers were unable to be specific in response to interview questions.

Selection Criteria. From the teacher survey and from earlier discussions the linking agent culled a list of nine criteria which emerged as being important to Cramer teachers in the selection of a specific reading program. These criteria were that a selected program should include strategies appropriate for:

1. Teacher training
2. Appropriate for junior high students, 2 or more years below grade level
3. Materials of high interest-low vocabulary

4. Develops and strengthens positive attitude toward learning

5. Provides motivational strategies for students

6. Emphasis on comprehension (inferences, generalizations, conclusions)

7. Emphasis on language skills (reading directions, writing skills)

8. Can be implemented by classroom teacher

9. Seems compatible with present programs.

Using these criteria, the linking agent selected and provided members of the DMG with information on eleven programs from the resource pool. Those included:

1. San Diego Right to Read
   San Diego, California

2. Pegasus-Pace
   Tuscaloosa, Alabama

3. Vocational Reading Power
   Pontiac, Michigan

4. Pupils Advancing in Learning

5. Project HOSTS (Helping One Student to Succeed)
   Vancouver, Washington

6. Learning to Read by Reading
   Jamestown, California

7. The Upstairs School
   Portland, Oregon

8. Flagstaff Title I Reading
   Flagstaff, Arizona

9. Reading/English Rotation Project
   Thomson, Georgia

10. Intensive Reading Improvement Program
    Chicago, Illinois

11. Secondary Reading Laboratories Program
    Parkersberg, West Virginia

Individuals studied the programs in relation to their defined criteria and with the intent of finding a program which could be used in their English classes. There is record of interest in Pegasus-Pace and Vocational Reading Power.

Throughout this process the linking agent was finding that the DMG was easily distracted. They wanted to spend meeting time discussing behavior problems and school issues generally, rather than sticking to the task at hand. "They are," says the linking agent, "preoccupied with discipline problems, and it was always difficult to keep people focused on 'reading' as a particular problem to be considered."

MIRP. Some movement was made toward choosing a particular program. Then in May, 1977, the developer of the Model Intensive Reading Plan Program (MIRP) was in this city to speak about her program. Three Cramer teachers were released for a portion of a day to hear her speak. The Title I coordinator also heard a brief portion of her presentation. "The program developer," said the linking agent, "is a very impressive salesperson," and the Cramer teachers were impressed. As teachers remember their reactions, they express a sense of emotional excitement. One teacher recalls, "We thought that here was the answer to our reading problems, not only for our own building, but for the entire school district." They report that the problem solving process was dropped. MIRP was the answer.

Plans were made to see the program in action. Some consideration was given to sending two teachers to a two-week training session, but it was eventually decided to send two people to observe the program instead. Only one teacher would be free to make that trip in July. The linking agent considered sending the parent on the DMG, but decided that there would be clear advantage in sending the Title I coordinator instead. Because of Cramer's dependence on Title I funds, she believed the coordinator's support to be essential and believed that the trip to the demonstration site would help her understand what they were doing. One teacher and the Title I coordinator made the trip.

About what they saw, the teacher recalls, "It was awful. It's a dehumanizing method. The results may be good, but we just knew we couldn't use it here. (Title I coordinator) was horrified." That program would not work at Cramer; the two visitors to the demonstration site were convinced of that. "In September we told the staff, 'No, we can't

possibly use that program.'"

Their rejection of MIRP, however, was not an explicit decision. By the time the 1977-1978 school year started, the school district had new schedules for junior high schools, so that the time which was available in the past for meetings would no longer be available. After trying with much difficulty to work around the new schedule, the linking agent called a meeting of the DMG. Two teachers were there for the whole meeting, a third attended for a short time, and two others were unable to attend. The parent, who herself maintains a very full schedule, recalls that she did not know about the meeting until too late. The linking agent remembers that the basis for rejection of MIRP was really just the teacher who had visited it telling the other teacher present some of the details of the trip. The linking agent advised the teacher who had visited to talk with other members of the DMG about the visit; the teacher assured the linking agent that she would do so. The program was no longer considered for use.

Refocusing on Program Selection. At some point in this process, some of the Cramer teachers began to gain a great deal more confidence in their own reading program. "Actually," remembers one teacher, "the more we looked into the programs, the more we realized that we didn't need a new program." During the January, 1978 interviews by the researcher, at least three people volunteered the idea that it would have been better had Cramer served as a model reading program in the Consortium resource pool, rather than trying to choose another program from it. Wherever this idea came from originally, the staff was obviously pleased with the thought.

By late fall of 1978 the DMG had essentially dwindled to two teachers; these two teachers considered themselves, and were considered by others, to be making most of the decisions regarding the project. Discouragement at the time they had put in on the process, problems in scheduling meetings, the absence of programs which excited them, and other major demands on people's time all served to draw people away from the project.

In November, 1977, the linking agent offered to send two people to Dallas, Texas to a National Diffusion Network Conference on Title I programs where some of the Consortium programs would be presented. They chose not to go. Says one teacher, "All the disseminators would be there to present their programs, but -- frankly -- that's so commercial...everyone selling his or her own programs." "That's the weakness with the whole process," says another. "All we had to look at were commercial blurbs on each project.

And they really were commercial in the sense that they were each trying to sell us." But the teachers say now that someone should have gone to Dallas. They think they might have been able to get a better sense of what the projects were about. The linking agent wishes they had gone as she believes that they would have gotten a picture of what they are a part of nationally, that the sense of being part of a major project would have been an important motivator.

Cramer Reading Center. Because they were unable to find any programs which could be used in their English classes, they were now beginning to look at the possibility of adding something to their reading center. Students come to the reading center two hours a week as part of their basic English classes. Students are placed in basic English rather than in regular English classes on the basis of their performance on the city-wide testing program with the Gates MacGinitie test. The staff firmly believes that such a single-shot written test is not an adequate diagnostic tool and to compensate they do move students in or out of the center on the basis of more informal observation and assessment.

The reading center is a relatively large book-lined room, divided into four working areas. The case study researcher observed in the center during a day which teachers said was fairly typical of their normal operation. Students entered the room and went to separate tables, with four students and one teacher or teacher-aide at each table. Students listened to a tape recording of a novel and followed along with the books in front of them. After approximately 15 minutes of listening time, the adult at the table asked them several content questions about what they had heard and read, and students then had a choice of several reading games such as Scrabble and a cube-letter game which were distributed at the various tables. The games were competitive among the students and at the end of the period the winner from each table received a pencil as a prize. In addition, students were awarded points for good behavior. When they accumulate an agreed-upon number of points, they receive a reward such as being allowed to watch a special movie which the teachers select.

Though the room is filled with books, they are not an active part of the program in the center. The teachers explained that many of the series, some of which are in excellent condition and appear to be unused, are from an earlier reading program which had been set up by another teacher. The teachers said that students sometimes check out some paperbacks which are displayed on a shelf, but that is incidental to the program of the center itself.

Teachers believe that the diagnostic process and general

management of the reading center needs improvement and Basic Reading Center Program (BRCP) (a pseudonym) and Project Catchup appeared to have elements which could be helpful. Teachers concentrated on examining those two programs.

A representative from Project Catchup visited Cramer in November. Teachers liked that program, but some aspects did not seem workable in their junior high setting. "The woman insisted that children come every day to the reading center," remembers one teacher. "That just couldn't work with our schedule."

BRCP was attractive because of the diagnostic testing component. The BRCP developer visited them. The staff was interested in what he had to offer. "We liked the southern project because it resembles what we have here very much. Frankly, it is this program." They were not impressed with the developer's lack of knowledge of junior high realities and the scheduling that is involved in a junior high setting. But they felt that parts of the program were adaptable and felt that such would be acceptable to the developer.

Program Decision. By December, 1977 teachers were obviously feeling some real pressure to do something to make a decision. "It's getting to be embarrassing," explained one teacher. "People are sincere: we're trying; but we just can't find a program that fits." Another teacher said simply, "It's time we do something."

In December, the linking agent brought materials to Cramer, providing them with more details on BRCP and on Pegasus-Pace, another program which has elements which speak to Cramer's needs. One teacher stated explicitly that he didn't believe they needed a new program -- that they do fine already. He appeared to be persuaded, however, when two others stated their belief that their testing is bad, and that's an area where they are in need of help. The discussion focused on the diagnostic instruments of BRCP, and the group decided to have a long meeting in January, either with reserve teachers releasing them from their classrooms for a half-day or with stipends paid for a late afternoon or Saturday meeting.

Thanks to the linking agent's persistence, a three-hour meeting of the DMG was scheduled for January 24. The linking agent was determined to have a decision by the end of this meeting. She was equipped with materials, dates, and with some solid group process to facilitate decision making. Present at that meeting were five teachers of the English department. Since the February, 1977 meeting one

teacher has left the department and another who faces retirement has dropped out of the DMG. The parent was unable to attend.

By the conclusion of the meeting, the group had explicitly decided to adopt the management system including diagnostic testing and record keeping and some of the materials of BRCP. They decided to schedule two days of training for April 4 and 5, selecting those dates from among several that the linking agent had to suggest.

In less than one week the decisions of the January 24th meeting were thrown into turmoil. As stated earlier in this report, the school district has been under court order to desegregate its schools. In spite of repeated efforts, they have moved further and further from total compliance. In choosing Cramer as a location for the Consortium Reading Project, the linking agent inquired about Cramer's position in relation to the desegregation plan and was assured that it was well within the guidelines and would not likely be affected by future decisions. On January 30, however, the Cramer staff was informed that their school was included in new plans. On February 8, the area superintendent presented options for the desegregation of the area schools to the superintendent and to the Board of Education. Cramer would be clearly affected by any of the options: either to include only 8th graders next year, to be closed for renovation and then reopened as a K-8 fundamental school, or to be closed altogether.

The Board of Education voted to return to federal court and seek the easing of the court-ordered percentages. The district made its case in late March and then waited for the decision of the judge before any decisions would be made.

The Training

Cramer staff and students were left for the remainder of the 1977-1978 school year in a state of uncertainty regarding their future. The linking agent and two of the teachers completed a needs assessment which had been sent to them by the BRCP disseminator with whom they had contact. The assessment identified three areas which they believed to be particularly important components of future training for them: diagnostic testing, the teacher management system, and the parent involvement component.

It was the opinion of all concerned that it was not reasonable to follow through with the original plan of holding BRCP training on April 4 and 5. Releasing several teachers at one time is always a problem at Cramer because of the discipline problems of the school and, faced with

uncertainty regarding the fate of the school, people were unwilling to go through that process. Also, because the teachers had chosen a reading program which would enhance their current reading center, it would not be a simple thing for individual teachers to transfer any skills learned to whatever job they would have if they were not at Cramer.

During the next months the linking agent maintained close informal contact with the English department staff and with the Cramer principal. For a time she tried to keep people thinking of the various options they would, as individuals, choose if Cramer were to close or change the focus of its program to a K-8 fundamental school. To that end, she maintained phone and personal contact with people and sent a list of questions to ponder:

1. What does the desegregation plan mean for you in terms of placement during the 1978-1979 school year?
2. Do you expect to be at Cramer with the eighth grade next year?
3. Will you opt to remain at Cramer if given a choice?
4. Would you probably request a transfer to __(other junior high)__ or some other junior high?
5. Would you want to be part of the fundamental program at Cramer?
6. How will dividing up the present English staff among the other schools affect the Consortium Project and your involvement in it?
7. Do you think the reading center would be part of the fundamental school or would it be in conflict with that program?
8. Can the reading center function with only two teachers in the English department?
9. Should we consider making contact with __(other junior high)__ principal and English teachers? Do you know any of the staff?
10. When should we plan the BRCP training? Now? Summer?
11. What are your feelings about continued involvement with the Consortium Project?

12. What would you like to see happen next and when?

The linking agent stayed in close contact with the decisions being made and the directions being considered by the people who would ultimately make the decisions about Cramer. She attended a Board of Education hearing regarding the desegregation plan, and generally kept up on the news though much of it was, by necessity, speculation in the absence of a decision by the federal judge.

Eventually, the linking agent decided that it was inappropriate to continue pressing teachers to think about the Consortium and the future of BRCP until the time when some decisions were made by the federal judge, by the district, and thus finally permitting some decisions by school staffs and the individuals within them. She focused, then, on letting them know that she was aware of their dilemma and was available to be supportive in any way possible.

On Monday, May 22, the federal judge announced his decision in regard to the case presented by the school district. Essentially he told the district that he did not agree with their arguments, would not ease the percentage requirements, and that they would no longer be given a luxury of "moving toward" the required desegregation. In fact, they must achieve full desegregation, as defined by the court, by the fall of 1978 and again by the fall of 1979.

At the time of this writing, the Board of Education has voted to appeal the federal judge's decision and to request a stay of the requirement to be in compliance by the fall of 1978. They also voted a plan whereby schools can be desegregated by fall of 1978 if the stay is not granted. That plan would make Cramer a school with two programs -- the regular 8th grade and a 6-7 fundamental school. By the fall of 1979 the Cramer building would be turned over to a K-8 fundamental program.

Many decisions about the total building and about individual teachers must still be made. The linking agent and the principal are raising questions about involving the other junior high school where some Cramer students and possibly teachers will go. Nothing can be decided yet, however. At this point, the training and future implementation of BRCP at Cramer is still very much in question.

IV. DECISION MAKING ROLES

Though the roles of various individuals have been a part of the previously described series of events, they deserve more careful examination and description. Essentially four individuals or groups of individuals had a continuing role in relation to the Consortium Project at Cramer to date. They are the linking agent, the school principal, the parent representative to the Decision Making Group, and the English department staff.

The Linking Agent

"(The linking agent) has met extensively with the staff," reports the principal. "And she has so dang much patience. The strong point throughout the whole process is that they like her so much." This sentiment was voiced repeatedly by individuals being interviewed. One teacher said, "We have really enjoyed her. She has high standards for kids, and it's nice to work with someone who has the same philosophy that we have. She is very conscientious."

To some extent, however, her "dang much patience" to which the principal referred is seen as a disadvantage. "We just didn't move through the process as fast as she should have made us," states one teacher. "Maybe she should have pushed harder."

The linking agent's primary task, of course, is to assist in problem identification, program selection and implementation. To that end, she has provided the DMG with processes, agendas, and materials as described earlier in this report. Her initial information regarding reading programs was in the form of written descriptions. As people expressed interest in particular programs, she sought additional information from the developers, set up telephone contacts and conference calls, received and shared information from the Consortium and other linking agents of the project, sent people from Cramer to demonstration sites, and brought program developers to the city to experience Cramer and to talk with staff.

In addition to this formal role, however, is another level of responsibility that the linking agent is assumed to carry. Throughout the entire process, beginning with the first attempts to identify a particular school with which to work, both the principal and the linking agent herself have assumed that she is responsible for a tremendous amount of behind-the-scenes work and nitty-gritty detail management. A certain amount of this is inherent in the role of linking agent, but because the linking agent is herself a tenured teacher in this district, she is assumed to know -- and does know -- how

the system works beyond what would probably be true in working with another school district. Thus, the linking agent is responsible for the contacts with Title I, with the area superintendent, with the reserve teacher office. On practically every detail of the project, she is responsible both for seeking information for the project and for keeping others informed about the project. From the principal's point of view, that is the linking agent's task, not his. When asked what he saw to be the area superintendent's view of the process, the principal explained, "I've never talked with him about the project. The linking agent does a lot behind the scenes and she does a good job of it. She works with the area superintendent, with the Title I coordinator and with other people that have to be informed."

Teachers, too, see the explicit responsibility for communication to be the linking agent's. Though it cannot be known to what extent teachers talk informally with each other or with the principal about the project, the explicit and formal communication regarding details is stated to be the linking agent's responsibility.

The linking agent is comfortable in the roles of linking agent, both in the formal role of process facilitator and in the more informal behind-the-scenes role. She moves easily in classrooms, in meetings with teachers and with administrators.

There is one aspect of the linking agent role with which she is not comfortable. Throughout the process at Cramer she has felt frustration with the narrowness of her task, i.e., assisting teachers in dealing with reading problems by introducing reading programs which are a part of the Consortium Resource Pool. Despite the fact that reading is a most important problem area at Cramer, it does not operate in isolation from other problems with which the school must deal. Another problem, she feels, lies in the definition of reading. "The Consortium Resource Pool," says the linking agent, "maintains a narrow definition of 'reading.' I think reading is a part of language arts and is more complex and intertwined with other aspects of learning such as problem solving."

The linking agent has struggled with these limitations of her role several times in her work at Cramer. She became involved with the Scott-Foresman materials described earlier because she felt it was important to be saying to teachers that she was interested in their problems, not just in her own solutions. Recognizing the preoccupation of staff with behavior and discipline problems, she introduced them to an affective program, New Model Me. Noting that one teacher in particular spent a great deal of

time talking about discipline problems, she brought him some specific materials about discipline which she thought might be helpful. In each case, however, she has felt constrained from doing much with these issues. Though she sees them as being intertwined with the reading needs of students in the school, her role definition is to work only with reading programs and only with those within the Resource Pool.

The Principal

Key to any school program is the school principal and the Cramer principal wanted this program. He is worried about the reading scores of students who enter Cramer and, though he believes the English department to be "pretty solid" and believes that they "service kids decently," he is also worried that some kids will slip through the cracks. He has set the tone in the school that they should accept any help they can get, but also says that there is some question by staff of his "grabbing too many things."

Indeed, some teachers did volunteer feelings that maybe they have too many reading programs at the school, that sometimes it gets too confusing. It was these same teachers, however, who were anxious to add the Scott-Foresman materials to their repertoire so they, too, were unwilling to turn down the possibility of more help when they could get it.

The principal's role has been almost entirely one of staying behind the scenes. He helped the linking agent arrange an initial meeting with the reading specialist and the department chairperson in January, 1977, and since that time has not attended any of the meetings. The linking agent has kept him informed of when and where the DMG would meet and of any decisions that had been made or were pending. He believes, however, that, "they have to do this thing themselves," and for him that means that he should stay out of the process.

The linking agent does not agree with that stance. She believes that the support or non-support of the principal is critical to the process and though he has always provided the time to meet with her, she would have preferred for him to have been more involved and to make that involvement visible to the staff. She believes that the effect of that would have been to increase his own credibility and that the teachers would have known that it was important to him and that they were being supported in their involvement in the project.

One aspect of the project that requires the principal's support is the need to release teachers from their

classrooms so they could have long uninterrupted meetings for planning and/or training. He gave such approval for two or three meetings in the very early stages of the project. By winter, 1977, however, he was feeling a real pinch in this regard. When asked about the workability of releasing teachers for such meetings, he explained, "It kills me. Kids here mistreat substitutes. I had one substitute assaulted before winter vacation. Until that assault I had been willing to pay the price, because it's important for teachers to be able to plan their own inservice and that takes time. Now I don't know. The price is too high."

Cramer teachers are sympathetic toward this point of view and have gone out of their way to try to find other times to meet outside of teaching hours. The problem may well create a particular crunch in trying to plan for BRCP training.

The Parent

At the initial meeting on February 2, 1977, the Cramer English department chose to include a woman as a parent representative on the committee. As the teachers understand it, Consortium guidelines require the inclusion of a parent. According to the linking agent, though parent involvement is not a requirement, she did encourage it as an element of multi-constituency.

This woman is not a typical Cramer parent, as she is in fact a staff member of the school district. She works out of the area office as coordinator of school-community relations.

From her point of view, her participation on the Consortium DMG has been rather ironic. Her area office position attempts to establish, "meaningful parent involvement in the schools," and yet she sees her DMG role as being one of strictly fulfilling a federal requirement for parent involvement.

The linking agent was concerned about involving parents in all phases of the program, including the decision making. She met with the Community Resource Coordinator in a school which has maintained a very high level of parent involvement over many years, in hopes of getting some ideas on how to stimulate such activity. The CRC stressed that such activity must be a joint responsibility in order to be effective. She told the linking agent, "You can't be the only one. If the teachers don't make it happen, then it can't happen well." She gave the linking agent some ideas about encouraging interest on the part of teachers, but discouraged her from pushing it if it was not a priority

for the staff.

She says that she has been to a total of approximately four meetings and that her role has been primarily a listener. The reasons for that are, in her opinion, at the very heart of some important issues related to parent involvement in schools. The number of parents is an important factor and one parent does not result in involvement. "There is no one parent in any school who can adequately represent the various opinions and viewpoints of an entire school population and, in this case, the problem was heightened by the fact that there has been no parent organization at the school to whom I was responsible for reporting."

The principal reports that there was practically no parent involvement in the school prior to the fall of 1977. Cramer receives students from several different neighborhoods, so that transportation is a problem for parents who may want to get involved. This type of school is also often faced with problems of working parents and both a distrust of the school on the part of some people and a general respect of the school (it's your job, not mine, to educate my kid) on the part of other people. During 1977-1978 the amount of participation has increased substantially and they could have gotten several more parents to participate in the Consortium Project if they had ever been asked to do so.

But the parent involved says that it may be appropriate that more parents were <u>not</u> invited to join the DMG. A key issue is the role that parents are expected to assume on this kind of committee. In the case of the Consortium Project, she believes that it may not, in fact, even be appropriate to have parent participation. She believes that parents have a definite role in establishing general policy and guidelines for education, but the Consortium task may be too specialized to allow for meaningful involvement. This parent found that the vocabulary being used and the methodologies being considered required a level of knowledge that she does not have, even though she has an advanced degree in a related field and holds a full-time position with the schools. In short, parent involvement was not an important aspect of the Cramer project.

<u>The Teachers</u>

The teachers of the Cramer English department were the primary participants in the Decision Making Group at the beginning of the project that included seven people. By January, 1978, one teacher had left the staff and one soon-to-be-retired teacher chose to absent herself from the project. Thus, there is a potential of five active

teachers.

Of course, each of those people approaches the task at hand according to individual personal and professional agendas. Among the five, they represent a variety of programs in the school, as follows:

_____, reading specialist, works exclusively with the ESAA Basic Skills Center and Dorsett Reading Programs.

_____, is .4 time under Title I funding teaching Basic English classes and in the reading center and .6 time under local funding teaching standard English classes.

_____, has a division of time the same as the teacher above.

_____, is .2 time under Title I funding and .8 time under local funding.

_____, teaches two English classes and three business classes.

Of the five members of the English department, two teachers have been by far the most active in the Consortium Project. They work together closely, have primary responsibility for the reading center, and have levels of seniority which make it most likely that they will keep their jobs in a time of layoffs. By fall, 1977, some meetings of the DMG included only those two people from the Cramer staff.

Some of the other teachers are generally comfortable with the fact that two of the teachers were making most of the decisions. The reading specialist sees himself as being on the edge of the process and believes that position to be appropriate. Because he works exclusively with the ESAA reading program, he will not be directly affected by whatever program might be chosen. He has served as a resource to the group and, as a reading specialist, has been able to provide information and give advice.

Another teacher also concludes that she would not be affected at all by any program selected, because of the schedule of English and business courses that she teaches. Though she has not been included in some of the DMG meetings and ongoing process throughout this fall, she assumes that to be because of her mixture of classes and does not appear to be uncomfortable with the decisions.

One teacher, on the other hand, believes that he should not have been left out of recent processes. He would like to

have been a part of it because he does not have time scheduled to the reading center and would seem to be affected by any program that is adopted for use there.

According to the linking agent, scheduling and communication have been great problems in terms of including everyone in the meetings. She has left messages at the school for teachers to call her and they have apparently not received the messages. Consequently, meetings have unknowingly been scheduled at times when some people were unable to attend at all or in part. The problem of being left out was intensified when the principal decided that only two people could attend the Statewide Consortium Conference in April. The two more active teachers decided that they would be the two, even knowing that the teachers who expressed unhappiness at being left out of earlier decisions wanted to go to this conference.

"It's a very small group," perceives the linking agent, "but I'm not sure they work cohesively." Observed meetings of the DMG illustrate some of the problems. The group appears to approach problems with an intuitive sense of the nature of the situation and are hard pressed to be explicit about what they want to do and how they believe they can get there. Since the Consortium's prescribed problem solving process clearly requires explicit statements of problems and intentions, this probably means that the teachers did not fully use the prescribed and expected problem solving process.

To illustrate: At the meeting of January 24, DMG members were discussing diagnostic testing and in the process repeatedly made statements such as, "Our kids can't ..." or "The eighth graders all have trouble with ..." In an attempt to focus the discussion on the use of diagnostic tools, the linking agent asked them, "How do you know that?" They replied, "We just know!" They were unwilling to go any further than that.

At an earlier December, 1977, meeting the group strongly voiced the need to have a meeting of several hours length in order to make a program decision. Yet all possible times suggested by the linking agent were unacceptable and they "talked around" the questions of when to meet and whom to include in the meeting. It was ultimately left to the linking agent to put the arrangements into motion.

The group also has a difficult time sticking with decisions even when they have been explicit. An illustration is the decision to adopt the BRCP program, particularly the system of diagnostic testing. As stated earlier, that decision was thrown into turmoil because of the potential closing of

Cramer. In discussing the effect of a closing, people began to vacillate about their earlier decision of the appropriateness of the testing program. "Maybe we should try out some of the tests. If they're too hard for our students," they argued, "maybe we shouldn't try the program after all." No firm decision was made, but the possibility of doing that was clearly left open at the end of the meeting.

In summary, the teachers have been the key decision makers and the primary participants on the DMG. The decision making process, however, has been affected by the high level of uncertainty related to district-wide decisions, the variety of professional roles and commitments of the individuals, and by the intuitive and easily distracted working style of the group.

EMERGENT ISSUES

As data collection for the writing of the case studies progressed several issues emerged from interviews and written documents. The issues which appear to relate most closely to Mitchell and Cramer Junior High Schools are, (a) the Consortium Project as an innovation in the schools, (b) the risks and rewards for various participants, (c) the acceptability and function of adaptation of programs, (d) participants' views of success, and (e) the Consortium Project as a model for bringing about change in schools. The following section of this report will examine each of those issues in relation to these two case studies.

I. THE CONSORTIUM PROJECT AS AN INNOVATION

The objectives of the Consortium Project are contained in a list of sixteen milestones and aim toward determining the reading needs of a school and establishing a reading program and long range monitoring and evaluation system which speaks to those needs. The steps by which all of this is to be accomplished involve very close attention to processes of problem definition, criteria establishment, product selection, training, implementation and evaluation. Thus, it can clearly be said that the Consortium is an attempt to bring to schools both processes and products whereby they can solve reading problems and which they can also use in decision making regarding other areas of the school curriculum. A valid question is, "To what extent are either the processes or the products innovations in the schools?"

The Process as an Innovation

Administrators at Mitchell Junior High School report that past innovations among English teachers were the result of the work of individual teachers developing curriculum in areas of particular interest to them. Beginning with the school year 1976-1977 and continuing through 1977-1978 there was increased emphasis on involving the staff as a whole in development of a spelling curriculum and in coordination and articulation of the curriculum throughout the entire district.

When individual teachers were asked about curriculum change projects in which they had been involved in the past, they did in fact describe Mitchell projects of an individual nature or the spelling and curriculum coordination projects of the past two years. The process of the Consortium did not represent a usual style of working for people at Mitchell.

The language arts coordinator viewed the Consortium process as a helpful reinforcement and model to use in his own attempts to bring staff together for projects by moving through a series of explicit problem solving steps. It fit nicely with a direction in which the district was moving, and apparently as, to an unknown degree, both an influence and a reinforcement.

The situation was somewhat different at Cramer Junior High School. As described in Section I of the Cramer case study, the urban district in which Cramer is located had implemented an extensive human relations process in 1973. All teachers in all schools were required by the district to be involved in processes of problem definition and selection of solutions by multiconstituent groups. That process is similar to the Consortium process.

In addition, during the 1977-1978 school year, the school became involved in a Teacher Corps project to design inservice training. That process, which directly and actively included one member of the Consortium DMG, and indirectly included all staff members, followed an elaborate planning process including definition of purposes, analysis of limits, design of program, and evaluation.

Even so, most teachers' experiences with curriculum changes were as participants on curriculum writing teams or in university classes. Such projects did not involve the same group problem solving processes. In general, then, the Consortium did not teach Cramer staff a new process. It did, however, show them how group problem solving techniques which they had learned and used in other tasks could be applied to curriculum.

The Products as Innovations

Both Mitchell and Cramer Junior High Schools have chosen products from the Consortium Resource Pool: innovations which they believe will speak to some of their identified reading needs. Those particular reading projects are, of course, innovations to the school, but a broader question is, "To what extent are similar reading projects new to the school?"

Individual English teachers at Mitchell Junior High School have spent a great deal of time in the past developing curriculum materials and classes. In the opinions of both the district language arts coordinator and the school principal, the staff has recently begun to look seriously at the time required for developing their own materials and courses and have begun to turn more to commercially-

developed materials. As described earlier, they have recently adopted Ginn spelling materials, Heath grammar materials, and a Scott-Foresman literature and reading series.

The Consortium Resource Pool has brought to the Mitchell staff a new kind of product -- non-commercial materials and training programs backed by research. Evidence of their interest in research and development products is a recent proposal by the school, funded by a state Title IV-C replication grant, to implement Project Catchup at Mitchell next year. The replication grants provide funds to adopt projects from the National Diffusion Network. Mitchell's interest in Project Catchup is compatible with their Consortium adoption of MIRP and expands their use of R&D products introduced to them by the Consortium.

As described in the case study of Cramer Junior High School, that school already had several reading programs functioning when they entered the Consortium Project. In fact, that was the first concern that teachers raised about being a Consortium site -- whether they were going to get confused by having so many reading programs. Of these programs already in place, two were primarily commercially-prepared materials, and two had been developed by the local district.

Reading programs were not new to Cramer. Though Cramer was first introduced to R&D reading programs through the Consortium Resource Pool, several comments during interviews indicate that teachers have not identified any categorical differences between commercial and R&D products. In fact, one of their complaints about the Consortium was that all the programs from the resource pool were so "commercial."

One important facet of the issue of Consortium Reading Pool products at both Cramer and Mitchell was the small number of products in the pool which were thought to be appropriate for secondary-aged students. This was repeatedly raised as a problem in interviews with teachers and administrators from both schools.

The linking agent said that initially there were very few secondary programs in the Pool. At one point she listed the programs which had been implemented in secondary schools: a total of nine out of the original forty programs:

HOSTS, (K-12)

Pegasus, (K-jr. high)

Pupils Advancing in Learning, (K-12)

Model Intensive Reading Program (MIRP) (K-12) (pseudonymn)

Basic Reading Center Program (1-8) (pseudonymn)

Project Reading Improvement, (1-8)

Remedial Reading and Home School Liaison, (upper elementary-secondary)

Learning to Read by Reading, (1-jr. high)

Right to Read (jr. high-sr. high)

The absence of secondary programs was a reflection of the greater awareness of the need for reading at an elementary level. In fact, according to the linking agent, at one time Mitchell was the only secondary school in the Consortium.

Additional programs were later added to the Pool, but they tended to be programs whereby students are taken out of classes in order to be taught reading, rather than methods for teaching reading as part of content classes. Teachers at both Cramer and Mitchell saw this as a serious limitation of the project.

II. RISKS AND REWARDS

A question that became a part of interviews with staffs at both Cramer and Mitchell was the question of time and the benefits of the Consortium Project. Put in more gross terms, the question really is, "Who pays what and who gets what?"

Whether explicit or implicit in the process, the basic benefits are expected to accrue to the students. Through the adoption of a new reading program, it is expected that some students in the school will be more successful in the area of reading. One could certainly ask, "What does it mean for a student to be more successful in the area of reading?" or "How do we assess that success or the lack of it?" It is not the intent of these case studies, however, to examine student outcomes. Though a reasonable activity might well be collection of baseline data, neither of the schools in these case studies have implemented a program to a great enough extent to expect any significant changes in students.

Instead, this section of the report will focus on the adults involved -- the teachers, the administrators, and the linking agent -- and will look at the costs and the rewards for those people.

The Teachers

Without a doubt, the people who are required to devote the greatest amount of time to the project are the teachers. It is these people who are expected to attend meetings, study programs, visit sites, participate in training, and revise their curriculum to include the new methods or materials. They pay the highest price in terms of time.

When asked what rewards they gain from involvement, teachers talked about educational excellence and improvement of instruction. They spoke of students' reading problems and the pleasure of learning ways to meet those problems. Some teachers also said they are rewarded by being exposed to new ideas, by the association with new people and with experiences such as the Statewide Consortium Conference.

Teachers were asked if they receive any rewards from the school or the district for the time which they put into this project. They all replied that they certainly had not receive any monetary rewards. Beyond that, teachers from both schools felt that their school administrators are generally removed from what they are doing and don't care one way or another. One teacher who has put a great deal of time into the Consortium Project said, "(An administrator) has told me he wants me to be involved in the project. But the only thing (the principal) has ever said to me about it was a very negative comment that was a real put-down. I guess it would be a nice 'reward' to have him even say anything supportive about it."

Another teacher answered the question, "Reward? From the administration, you mean? You have to understand that in this school district -- maybe in all school districts -- nothing beyond a basic level of competence is either rewarded or punished." This general point of view was also stated by a Mitchell administrator when he was asked his perceptions of some of the hindrances to implementation. "The burdens of this particular reading program are great," he said. "And this district has the wrong reward system. We reward people for being on time, not for making the effort to learn something new or to be a better educator."

The linking agent did, of course, offer compensation to staff in terms of release time from their classrooms to attend meetings and stipends for work beyond the school day. She perceives, however, that there is an important

difference between compensation and rewards. The main reward which she offered was visibility. To that end, she made sure that specific people and events were mentioned in the Consortium newsletter and in her own more local newsletter, and she distributed both to every teacher in the buildings in the project in order that participating teachers would have visibility with their peers. The Statewide Consortium Conference was intended to have the same purpose. (An important perspective on the answers of both teachers and administrators to this question regarding rewards is the low point of morale in both school districts at the time the question was asked. (See Mitchell Case Study, Section II, Initial Implementation.)

Teachers have put a great deal of time and mental energy into the carefully ordered process of the Consortium. It is the opinion of all of them that their own benefits from that time and effort are within themselves in knowing that they are better teachers or in the pleasure of meeting new people. As one teacher said, "Other people could care less."

The Administrators

The Consortium Project also places demands on administrators. Though less time is required of them than of the teachers, they nevertheless have given time to meeting with the linking agent, the case study researcher and other visiting participants such as project developers, trainers, Consortium staff, and NIE site visitors. They have dealt with the inconvenience of having teachers out of the building and whatever arrangements must be made for their absence.

The administrators were asked what risks and rewards are involved for them in the Consortium Project. One administrator answered, "I suppose it's a matter of ego. I might have to face people at the Teacher Center and feel embarrassed in admitting that we haven't done well with this thing." He was asked if the same was true in relation to his superiors, whether he would feel embarrassment in facing them. "Hell no," he answered. "Not with the superintendent, not with the assistant superintendent. I've tried to involve other principals. But there's no ownership anywhere. There's no punishment, or reward, for anyone in this business."

Another administrator explained his position. "To the extent that people see we're succeeding in reading and attach that to the Consortium program, I can point with pride. But in fact, the Consortium is not an important label. It's no concern of the Board of Education, for sure, and we're not hanging our hat on only one thing.

People in my position must learn not to credit any one piece with any more significance than is absolutely necessary."

Another administrator who is aware of his reputation of bringing many new programs into his building feels that the project does carry a risk for him in relation to his staff. "If it doesn't go well," he said, "then staff can say I'm wrong to have so many different projects. But I don't think I am wrong. I think it's important to provide many alternatives for students." Does he have to account for this project to his superiors? "No," he answered, and said that he couldn't imagine his superior would ever ask about it.

Administrators, as well as teachers, believe that the school systems neither reward nor punish performance in projects like the Consortium. At most, they would find it uncomfortable to admit failure to their peers or to their immediate subordinates. They also feel accountable for a public image that students are learning, but they do not perceive interest or support from those above them on the professional hierarchy.

The Linking Agent

The linking agent is the other major actor in the Consortium at the school level. She, too, invests a great deal of time. Though her salary is a defined and tangible reward, she also sees other, less tangible rewards and risks in being a part of the project. Some of those are personal in that she enjoys a job whereby she can feel she makes a difference and wherein she is not confined to an office but is in schools working directly with school staffs. She wants the project to be a positive experience for others, in order to feel that her job is well done.

She feels a risk in terms of the reputation of the Teacher Center, the local agency where she is housed. Individuals in Consortium schools have gone to that agency for assistance and for involvement in projects in the past and will likely do so in the future. Mitchell and Cramer staffs had both worked with Teacher Center people before the Consortium ever arrived on the scene. As the result of exposure at the Statewide Consortium Conference, Mitchell administrators have contracted with the Teacher Center for assistance with administrative leadership training.

It is important to the linking agent to enhance the reputation and services of the Teacher Center by doing a good job, by being perceived as a positive presence. It is interesting to note that the feeling is mutual, i.e., one

administrator saw a price of failure to be the embarrassment of facing people at the Teacher Center. That is a contact which both parties value and which both parties want to maintain.

III. ADAPTATIONS

Both Cramer and Mitchell Junior High Schools have selected reading programs which they intend to implement in their schools. Discussions with teachers about how they intend to use those programs are filled with statements such as, "We'll use pieces of the program." "We'll have to adapt it to fit." Given that an objective of the Consortium is the adoption of R&D reading programs, these statements raise questions about the acceptability of adaptation.

According to the linking agent, the amount of latitude for adaptation depends on the developer. She has found the developers with whom she has worked to be relatively flexible and, though they may insist that people who are certified as trainers be fairly pure in their use of the program, they are generally agreeable to adaptation within local sites.

Cramer staff, for example, checked with the BRCP developer about changing the daily schedule which is part of that program. He was agreeable. It is not clear how much adaptation is acceptable to the MIRP developer. The MIRP trainers and developer encourage implementing the methods one step at a time and acknowledge that full scale adoption cannot happen overnight. That is not exactly the same, however, as saying that it is acceptable to only attempt to adopt parts of the program.

The linking agent's own point of view is that she has strongly encouraged sites to use the program exactly as they are designed for a number of weeks or months. Only then, she believes, can teachers truly understand the program with enough depth to allow the most productive adaptation. At Mitchell, the linking agent said at least twice to staff that she felt it was important to be true to the designed program for at least a short period of time and to adapt it after that. One teacher asked of the linking agent, "When you think of MIRP in this school, do you see it being used 100%, like every day? You? Or someone you represent?" The linking agent replied, "Yes, I do. And the Consortium staff does." Same teacher then stated, "None of us ever see ourselves using it always. We see it as a method from which to extrapolate. We, none of us, plan to use it in any totality." To my knowledge, the linking agent never pressed this point further. At Cramer, however, the situation was different. By the time I

entered the scene in December, 1977, I never heard any suggestion that they would adopt any program in total -- it was always in terms of adopting part of BRCP, or parts of Project Catchup, etc.

The point of view of teachers and administrators is that adaptation is both necessary and desirable. Mitchell teachers assumed adaptation as a given since they would be using in a secondary setting a program initially developed for elementary schools. They first observed the program in a secondary school and the teacher emphasized the adaptations she had made. Though the original trainer emphasized the need to follow the script exactly, the follow-up trainer-demonstrator described a number of her own adaptations.

Mitchell teachers seem to be struggling to understand the essentials of MIRP and they are excited by those even though they reject some of the particular formats and schedules. One of the aspects of the program which interests teachers is that it is skill-oriented in contrast to the usual activity orientation of secondary English. They also like the emphasis on careful reading and on multi-sensory learning. One teacher sees it reversing some recent trends in secondary education which have allowed sloppy thinking rather than clear direction in what one is teaching.

At this point, Mitchell teachers view MIRP as a method which increases their range of response as teachers. It expands their repertoire and gives them self-confidence in being able to teach certain skills. The results of their summer workshop and their implementation in the following year will show to what degree they determine that they best stick to the script and to what degree they best develop their own adaptations to reach the desired results.

Cramer teachers have not yet received training in their chosen program so they know only the surface characteristics. Nevertheless, their very act of selection was based on the acceptability of selecting one piece of BRCP rather than the whole program. It remains to be seen whether they ultimately accept and implement that piece in toto or whether they find it to their advantage to adapt even that.

An interesting comparison presents itself in these two case studies, as both schools showed interest in MIRP and travelled to see it in action. One group liked what they saw and adopted it; the other group was "horrified" and rejected it. No doubt many factors contributed to the difference in the two responses. One factor, though, became clear in interviews. Cramer teachers observed the

program where it was used in its entirety and where they were told that such total implementation was essential. They came away with the impression that adaptation was out of the question. Parts of the method were unacceptable to them. Given the choice of all or nothing, they chose nothing.

Mitchell staff, on the other hand, observed a program where adaptation was an acceptable practice. There were parts of the program which they were convinced were not apropriate to the Mitchell setting. But they perceived that they had three choices. They could choose it all, they could choose none of it, or they could choose it and adapt it. They chose the last.

IV. INDICATIONS OF SUCCESS

The objectives of the Consortium take sites through a series of steps to effectively implement an R&D reading program. One definition of success would be that schools had moved through those objectives and successfully completed each of them.

Interviews with participants, however, reveal that their definitions of success are much more varied than that. The linking agent perceives that there are at least two levels. In terms of the sites, she lists several indications of success:

- School staffs will gain knowledge of R&D products.
- They will move through a process of problem-solving which they can use again.
- They will choose and then implement a product.

Beyond that, the linking agent believes that each site must be viewed individually because the external factors are so varied.

There is another level of success in the opinion of the linking agent. That relates to what the school-related agencies -- the Teacher Center, the Consortium's host agency, and the National Institute of Education -- learn about working with schools and what they learn about the linkage role and how that can help connect schools with R&D products. To that end, it is the responsibility of the agencies to collect valid information about whatever happens in the schools and to study that for what it reveals about schools and change.

Teachers, understandably, limit their views of success to the implementation of their chosen programs. Mitchell teachers emphasized 1) having sufficient familiarity with the MIRP methods to be able to use them, 2) increased implementation of the methods, and 3) seeing positive effects on students' learning. A reading teacher believes that teachers' awareness of reading problems in the content area would be an indication of success. Cramer teachers, with their uncertainty about the future, would feel success if they could become trained in the procedures and could actually receive the materials.

One administrator agrees with the reading teacher mentioned above, in that he sees a major accomplishment of the project to have been for English teachers to accept responsibility for teaching reading. He says he has always seen the project as being more generally educational instead of simply, "take a program and do it." Another administrator was uncertain just how he would judge success. He suggested two indicators to be the number of teachers using the method and how well students score on tests. Neither seemed particularly adequate to him, however. The third administrator would see success as being a program that would stay around, one that stood the test of time.

All of these views must be seen as coming in mid-stream. Each person's answers are influenced by where that person is <u>now</u>, in relation to the project, both in terms of what has happened already and in terms of what looks possible for the future. A similar question was not asked of all participants in the beginning of the project. In spite of these limitations, however, the range of answers do give an indication of the breadth of expectations which people hold.

V. THE CONSORTIUM AS A MODEL FOR CHANGE

As described in the chapter entitled, "The Consortium Project," the Consortium process involves 16 objectives through which the linking agent is expected to move as she works with an individual school. Those objectives represent very rational, logical problem solving steps and in most cases seem to appear in an orderly sequence, i.e., one step should logically happen before the next step can hope to be achieved.

Schools, however, are not rational, logical organizations. They <u>are</u> not, it is possible that they <u>cannot</u> be, and it could even be debated whether they <u>should</u> be.

These two case studies report many events both internal and external to the school which have prevented the orderly

movement from one objective to another or which have caused digressions which have had both positive and negative effects on the process.

Any expansion or dissemination of the Consortium model must certainly deal carefully with the reality of the implementation of rational linear objectives in the complex, holistic organizations called schools.

COMMENTS BY LINKING AGENT AND DIRECTOR OF THE CONSORTIUM PROJECT UPPER MIDWEST STATE LINKING AGENCY CONCERNING: MITCHELL AND CRAMER CASE STUDIES

The following statement is an effort to clarify ideas presented in the two case studies, Mitchell and Cramer Junior High Schools, and to give additional linking agent perspective to the data collected. There are always some difficulties in the "slice of life" case study approach. These additions are offered as a way of documenting and capsulizing past as well as current interactions accurately, and provide a broader contextual framework within which events can be understood.

Although specific sections from the case studies will be referred to, the intent is to address overall implications rather than particular incidents.

Cramer Junior High School, Section III, MIRP.

The Consortium Project milestones (attached) are keyed to local site objectives. Although the case study writer reports that the problem solving process was dropped:, an understanding of the milestones suggests that the selection of a reading program concludes, rather than drops, the problem solving process. Although not intended to be exclusively linear in design, the Consortium intervention strategy usually progresses from milestone #1 through milestone #13. Once teachers match a program to their needs, that phase (Milestones #3-5) of the process is concluded.

Cramer Junior High School, Section III, Refocusing on Program Selection

At Cramer, the need to improve students' reading skills was not a new school priority with the coming of the Consortium project. Efforts had already been made to address the school's reading needs. Examples of this include the two reading centers (Title I, Right to Read) and reading inservice sessions (provided by the district) attended by some of the staff. When discussing reading problems with Cramer staff, it was common to hear comments of what had been done to alleviate the problem; at the same time there was interest in exploring additional programs that would help.

The staff at Cramer reviewed and acknowledged what they had done in the area of reading, and considered new programs that might complement their existing efforts. This should not be viewed as detrimental to the Consortium process, but rather an attempt on the part of teachers to identify and reinforce proven practices already being used, and further to select and implement additional reading programs to meet school needs.

Although teachers expressed pleasure in reading about programs similar to their own -- characteristics of some programs were already in place at Cramer -- involvement in this process repeatedly surfaced their interest in doing more to improve reading in the school and to identify a program from the Consortium Resource Pool that would assist them. An idea that emerges from the Consortium work at Cramer which might be explored is the need for school people to see some of their own educational philosophy and practice in a new program, and the extent to which this has implications for increased ownership on the part of staff and more successful implementation of the innovation.

Editor's Note: There was some evolution of Consortium milestones over the course of the project. While they retained their rational, linear nature, some of the milestones were expanded and elaborated. The list of thirteen milestones that the linking agent refers to, and has attached, is an earlier version of the Project's current sixteen milestones referred to by the case study writer.

CONSORTIUM MILESTONES

1. SITE SELECTED
2. DECISION-MAKING GROUP (DMG) SELECTED
3. DMG COMPLETES PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION
4. DMG ESTABLISHES R&D SELECTION CRITERIA
5. DMG SELECTS READING PROGRAM
6. DMG PROJECTS INSTALLATION PROBLEMS
7. DMG COMPLETES INSTALLATION PLAN
8. DMG/LA ET AL. PROVIDE INITIAL TEACHER TRAINING
9. TEACHERS BEGIN TRIAL INSTALLATION
10. DMG ET AL. COMPLETE ASSESSMENT OF INSTALLATION TRIAL
11. DMG ET AL. COMPLETE REVISION/MODIFICATION OF PROGRAM AND INSTALLATION PLAN
12. TEACHERS START FULL SCALE ADOPTION
13. DMG/LA ET AL. DEVELOP PLAN FOR CONDUCTING EVALUATION/ MONITORING ACTIVITIES

APPENDIX

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

Data was collected for both case studies during six months on Year Two of the three-year Consortium Project. The researcher relied heavily on three tools: written reports and documents, openended interviews with key actors, and observations of meetings and classroom settings.

Data Sources

- Written documents and reports
  - Linking Agent contact reports
  - Written communication between the linking agent and The NETWORK
  - T_1 and T_2 interviews
  - Problem Identification Site Reports to NIE from The NETWORK
  - Material descriptive of selected reading programs
  - Miscellaneous memos, charts, statements produced by DMG members.

- Open-ended interviews throughout the six months

  Mitchell Junior High School

  - Principal - 3 interviews
  - K-12 Language Arts Coordinator - 3 interviews
  - Area Leader - 5 interviews
  - 7 Teachers - 6 to 12 interviews per month

  Cramer Junior High School

  - Principal - 3 interviews
  - 5 Teachers - 3 - 9 interviews per month
  - Parent Representative on DMG - 1 interview
  - Title I Tutor - 1 interview

  Consortium

  - Linking agent - 8 to 10 interviews of length
  - Linking agent supervisor - 1 interview

- Observations

  Mitchell Junior High School

  - DMG Meetings - 4
  - MIRP Training - 1/2 day

MIRP Demonstrator - 1 day
English Classrooms - 3

Cramer Junior High

DMG Meetings - 4
Reading Center - 1/2 day
Board of Education Meeting - 1

Limitations of Data

Several severe limitations exist in the data collection process used to write these case studies. The most obvious limitation is that the data collection Project began in August, 1976. The happenings of the first fifteen months are, therefore, retrievable only from written documents and from people's memories. As a result, many questions cannot be effectively addressed.

The problem is particularly severe at Mitchell. One administrator objected to the repetition of interviews that he and other staff members were being asked to participate in. The case study researcher was sympathetic to his complaint. Following a series of communications among the researcher, the Consortium Project director and the Mitchell administrator, the researcher agreed to limit the focus of interviews to events after September, 1977, and to rely on data from earlier interviews for information on the period prior to that. In fact, information recorded from the earlier interviews was very inadequate to this task. Virtually all information in the case study covering the program selection phase comes from linking agent contact reports. Reporting a single perspective is a serious limitation in case study research.

Epilogue to Mitchell Junior High School Case Study

Introduction

The primary purposes of this case study epilogue are to report on events that have occurred during Year Three of the Consortium Project and to summarize the retrospective views and attitudes of site actors toward project elements. Specifically, the epilogue will detail events, views and attitudes concerning the process in evidence at Mitchell Junior High School that has brought the project to its current status (as of May 1979). It will similarly describe events, views and attitudes concerning the product, Model Intensive Reading Plan, MIRP (a pseudonym), and its use as of that date. Finally, the epilogue will describe the activities and role of the linking agent during Year Three, and report retrospective views of teachers and administrators concerning her role and its significance in carrying out the project as a whole. As background to this discussion, the school context description from the original case study will be expanded upon, with a focus on those elements and recent events that appear to have direct bearing on the project's status at the end of Year Three.

The School Context

Two weeks after the opening of school in September 1978, a teachers' strike began that was to last three weeks. Although there appeared to be no lingering acrimony or preoccupation with this event when teachers were interviewed in May 1979, the School Board's decision to increase the teachers' classroom load from five to six out of seven periods each day has made the staff somewhat less willing to spend time, without compensation, on extensive materials preparation.

This fact, however, has been tempered by the existing norms and characteristic working style of the teachers at Mitchell, which include a strongly held view by both teachers and administration that the staff is professional and highly competent to do their jobs according to their own judgment and on the basis of their own decisions. District policy over the past few years has pointed clearly in the direction of greater programmatic continuity and uniformity, a thrust which has had to operate against the weighty influence of past practice and norms under which teachers "did their own thing" in a more laissez-faire environment.

The Process

In keeping with the norm of avoiding meetings, there were no formal meetings of the MIRP Decision Making Group (DMG) or of teachers called by the language arts area leader during Year Three. The linking agent initiated three meetings during the year, at which teachers talked "informally" (to quote one participant) about individual needs, the current status and direction of the project, and how to extend the program's use to other departments. However, there has been a good deal of informal communication about the program as well as more than occasional visits to one another's classrooms to see the method in action. According to one teacher new this year to the school and to the program, "The staff is pretty open to discussion. We don't need meetings. Those of us that are using it pretty extensively, when we have a question, we just walk into somebody's room or office and say, 'Hey, I need some help on...'." According to this teacher, such informal discussions among various teachers occurred at least weekly, and often daily.

During Year Three, there were some staff changes that affected the project, but did not stymy it. The area leader moved to another school in the district and his position was filled by a teacher within the department who had been involved with the project from the outset. Another teacher who was a prime supporter also moved, and with her went some of the project's "leadership," since she had been viewed as a spokesperson for it. According to the principal, the staff changes resulted in a loss of potential "mentoring" in the project that might otherwise have occurred.

Two teachers new to the building were asked by the new area leader to attend a one-week workshop given by MIRP representatives in January 1979, and they were accompanied by two others who wanted to learn more about the program. Also attending this workshop were four teachers from the district's other junior high school and staff of other school districts. The workshop leader was described as "very adept" and contributed to the new Mitchell teachers' decision to become involved with the MIRP.

Although the new teachers got a clear message from the area leader that they should attend the MIRP workshop, it was equally clear to them that the decision to participate in program implementation was theirs. The request to attend the workshop was viewed as "an opportunity" graciously offered to a newcomer, along with released time during the school day. In keeping with norms included under the rubric of "professionalism," one of the workshop attendees described the message from the area leader in this fashion: "...The general direction was, 'Use it as you see most beneficial for you.'" The outcomes of the workshop and of the influence of other teachers' satisfaction with their use of

MIRP were that the two new teachers were added to the ranks of MIRP implementers. In addition, a third teacher (previously a guidance counselor in the school with some English teaching responsibility) decided to use it, although she did not feel the need for training, since she had seen so much of it going on in the building that she believed she knew what was necessary to get started.

At the end of Year Three, all but two people in Mitchell's language arts department were using MIRP to some extent. Of the non-users, one had had two maternity leaves during the course of the Consortium Project's three years, and was intending to get started with MIRP as soon as she organized some other things. The area leader reported that this teacher sometimes talked about being a little "embarrassed" at not having begun to use MIRP yet. The other remaining non-user indicated that he did not use MIRP for two reasons.

First, having attended one day of a training session, he thought that it required too much time for materials preparation -- time he would rather spend on correcting students' writing assignments, which he could do more frequently if he did not have to spend time on MIRP. (This concern was expressed in the context of a reference to the recently-increased teaching load.) His concern about time was further influenced by the installation during Year Three of two new textbooks in the department's instructional program; he believed that becoming familiar with those new materials was a priority for him during the year. Second, he stated without elaborating that although he likes much of its approach, he had some specific misgivings about the MIRP program. However, he followed this statement with the comment, "I'm probably mistaken anyway...I'm probably not doing something quite right." He reportedly did not feel any pressure or isolation from others in the department who were using MIRP and talking about it often. Rather, the sense of being in some way mistaken seemed to be his own conclusion, drawn from seeing the evidence of satisfaction among his colleagues who were using MIRP in some way.

Thus, it appears that the governing norm of free choice, avoidance of conflict or hostility, mutual professional respect, and the use of informal communication channels have characterized the process of program implementation and expansion within Mitchell during Year Three. Those who have decided to begin implementation this year have done so in large part as a result of observing satisfied colleagues whose opinions they respect. Those who have not expressed some misgivings about their positions, apparently for the same reason, did not appear ostracized or excluded from the department's social nexus. The fact that individual teachers are free to use MIRP methods to the extent they choose has no doubt made it easier to start and break in gradually. Additionally, the atmosphere of informal, easy

communication has provided a support system for those who are just starting, as well as for those who have been using MIRP for some time.

Two final aspects of the process during Year Three merit mention. First, as in Years One and Two, there has been no particular involvement of parents in the project in any way, nor does the staff think that parents are particularly aware of its existence. According to the principal, there has been no deliberate effort to develop such an awareness. Second, five teachers participated in a three-day workshop (mentioned in the original case study and planned to include seven teachers) with compensation, during summer of 1978. The time was spent discussing how much of the MIRP program to use in the class room and then working individually on developing materials for vocabulary, for comprehension skills, and a scheduling system for modifying the existing instructional program to include more of the MIRP methods. These were then duplicated for all to use in their classrooms.

The staff's retrospective view of the process of decision making and implementation for the Consortium Project appeared to be both non-specific and generally positive. That is to say, few specifics were mentioned; but perhaps this is because few problems were noted or recalled. Interestingly, two of the three difficulties mentioned related to the problem identification and R&D selection criteria phases, both of which had occurred during the time when, at the staff's request, the linking agent was absent. Respondents recalled that the problem identification stage was difficult because the decision to participate (i.e., the initial judgment that some sort of problem existed) "came from above."

The area leader stated that the DMG experienced a great deal of difficulty in arriving at "consensus" about the selection criteria, and that this was because the (unidentified) "convener," who was eventually replaced, interfered with this. A teacher on the DMG implied that selection criteria originating with one individual may not have been well understood by other DMG members, since she found that the import of various criteria became clearer as actual programs were explored. In this view, the relationship between R&D selection criteria and program selection is mutually influential, rather than strictly linear. A causal connection between the linker's absence during this step and the problems encountered should not necessarily be assumed here, since other schools involved in the Consortium Project also experienced difficulty with the very same steps.

Among the elements of the entire decision making process, the visit to an actual site using the program selected was retrospectively viewed as the most significant. Seeing MIRP in action and talking with actual users was described by one teach-

er who went on the site visit, and who has most completely revamped his teaching procedures to incorporate MIRP, as "an efficient way to see how techniques are going to operate in the classroom."

It is difficult to gauge whether the linear, rational decision making process has been learned by the school site actors, and, by extension, whether they would likely apply it to other school problems in the future. Yet evidence exists to indicate that the answer in both instances is negative. The characteristic lack of specificity in responses to questions about the process -- coupled with statements that things have always been done that way -- permits the inference that participants in the process found nothing noteworthy in it. As one DMG member put it, "We always work in a smooth, harmonious way." The area leader herself offered the opinion that there was probably no effect on present or future decision making. And according to one of the two teachers not using MIRP, most decisions are made informally and are arrived at by "chatter in here" (i.e., the department office).

Examination of a concrete decision recently made by the department, the selection of two new textbooks, in conjunction with its sister department at the district's other junior high school, offers a specific example in which the linear, rational model was not used. Given the impetus of district funds made available for the purchase of two new language arts textbooks for every student, the selection process involved: 1) a search for sample copies to be screened (with no articulated criteria) by teachers at the other school; 2) transmission of those deemed possible, along with a routing slip and blank spaces for open ended comments, to the Mitchell language arts department staff members; 3) a review of the sample copies by individuals at Mitchell, who noted their comments (according to no articulated criteria) on the sheet provided; and 4) a single meeting of English teachers from both schools at which the final selection was made.

According to one teacher, informal communication about the textbooks passed between the two schools through spouses who worked in each building; and there was general agreement as to the final selection by the time the meeting was convened. This teacher (a member of the DMG from Year One) also stated that this method was better than holding meetings because it allowed more time for review than would be possible in a meeting. Apparently, the meetings and somewhat "formal" discussion called for by the linear, rational model violate the norms of informal discussion and avoidance of meetings that prevail in the decision making style at Mitchell.

Teachers' sense of themselves as professionals has colored both their working relationships with one another and with the school administration. They view colleagues with professional respect and display an attitude that allows both for cooperative efforts and for the actions of individuals who wish to conduct their classes in a way that differs from what others do. Thus, the number of teachers implementing the MIRP program has steadily increased, primarily as a result of the influence of respected colleagues who have had positive experiences in using the method. At the same time, no one has reported feeling pressured to sign on and anyone who does not participate is apparently not isolated or castigated. As a teacher with eleven years' service in the school explained, "There is no open hostility in this school."

Relations between the Mitchell administration and the staff are similarly cordial and governed by the same norms for working relationships. The teachers have a distaste for "top-down" decisions (as was amply apparent at the start of Year One), and the best way to kill a project at Mitchell would be for the principal to mandate participation in it. The Mitchell principal not only knows that this is the case, but he believes that teachers should be involved in decisions about their own work and be committed to what they do if the outcome is to be successful. He also believes that there is a necessary amount of "muddling through" in arriving at decisions and implementing programs, and that these things are best done gradually. He has reportedly been sensitive to the teachers' resistance to extra work during uncompensated time; and during Year Three he approved the use of substitute teachers and summer pay for teachers to participate in MIRP training and materials development activities. He believes that this has been essential to implementation of the program and to the addition of new implementing teachers.

Another norm that operates at Mitchell, where the staff is very busy with their work all day long, is that communication is best when it is informal; and they tend to eschew formal meetings except when a task leaves them no possible way to avoid one. Informal communication is fairly extensive, and is aided within the language arts department by the existence of a comfortable and pleasant department office with work space for each teacher. Although, for any given teaching period, most faculty are assigned to be in classrooms, much of the non-teaching time appears to be spent in the office, where each staff member is easily accessible to others.

The Product

Year Three was marked by the extension of the MIRP implementation to three additional teachers in the Mitchell language arts department (with no attrition among previous users, other than for reason of transfer), and to three (out of ten) English teachers at the district's other junior high school. At Mitchell, the three faculty members teach English, reading and English, and reading and social studies, respectively. The other school's language arts area leader became an enthusiastic supporter of the program and an advocate for its use throughout the system. In addition, a Mitchell teacher who had been trained in MIRP methods as an English teacher was assigned in Year Three to Spanish classes, where she enthusiastically used the methods. Her enthusiasm for MIRP's application to foreign language was so great that she initiated a request to be interviewed by this researcher despite the fact that the area leader had not included her name on the respondent list. She wanted to be sure to convey the message that MIRP is effective in teaching foreign language.

In all instances at Mitchell, MIRP is being used in a modified form, the modifications consisting primarily of a selection of skills to be taught using its methods within portions of the time devoted to English instruction. The major reasons for such modification involve questions of time and habit. The pre-existing English program involved materials and a system of teaching by "units," each of which was built around books that rotated among teachers because only classroom sets were available (instead of enough for an entire grade level). Although the availability during Year Three of two textbooks for every student did make it possible to move out of the "unit" structure, such a change would entail a great deal of materials preparation (hence, teacher time) to go along with MIRP methods, as well as an alteration in teaching behavior and curriculum organization.

Because of the magnitude of the task, teachers have opted to incorporate MIRP methods at present into the teaching of certain skills (e.g., literal and inferential comprehension, word-attack, vocabulary, dictation and penmanship), and to continue to work slowly toward more extensive implementation in the future. In the interim, topics, skills, and materials that are not now adaptable to MIRP must be taught, and time within English classes must be provided for them. The proportion of time for MIRP and non-MIRP activities, as well as the extent to which teachers have incorporated MIRP methods, varies widely from one individual to another.

All of the English teachers involved with the MIRP program, as well as the principal, viewed the product they chose as effective in meeting their problems. They did not think that all had been "solved" by the end of Year Three. They do not

view MIRP as a panacea, and they continue their initial resolve to adapt and modify it as their professional judgment dictates; but they clearly believed that progress had been made and will continue to be.

The primary instructional effect mentioned by the principal, area leader, and teachers alike was that the staff now incorporated into its view of a secondary English teacher (and into its teaching behavior) the idea that reading and basic skills are part of his/her responsibility -- not just literature, as was formerly the case. This attitude has also been brought about by a general emphasis throughout the district, on the teaching of basic skills, in addition to the elimination of a seventh grade reading course as a requirement for students. With the elimination of this requirement, instruction in the basic skills of reading must receive more attention from the English teacher.

The one teacher who has revamped his program entirely to incorporate MIRP methods stated that teaching in that fashion has convinced him that junior high schools should "imitate" what is done at the elementary level to a greater extent than what is done in high school. In addition, the area leader reports that MIRP has "changed some people's ideas about teaching vocabulary" so that they now use various modalities to do this.

Perhaps the greatest effect of the program, however, was on the extent of cooperation, cohesiveness and communication among teachers about their work with students. The principal noted more "openness and sharing" among teachers than existed before, and one of the non-users remarked that, "It has been a kind of pulling together for us" because people are doing similar things and can compare notes or share materials they develop.

The Role of the Linking Agent

During Year Three, the linking agent played a less visible and active role than she had previously; this was viewed by teachers and administrators as appropriate at this final stage. She visited the school about once each month and encouraged people to seek help from her if it was needed. According to teachers who had been involved with MIRP before this year, the linking agent's most important Year Three function was to help the three new MIRP users. One of these three reported that she had, in fact, called for and received assistance from the linking agent.

While the teachers believed that the linking agent's assistance was no longer essential, they did express the view that her involvement was still helpful. As one teacher put it, "There is a feeling of commitment when someone's coming in

from the outside." Even though it was clearly perceived that the program would continue without her at this point, it was thought "if she wasn't there, it (the program) wouldn't be used to the extent it is."

Teachers and administrators' retrospective view of the linking agent's role over the three years, however, depicted her as absolutely essential. The primary reasons for this view are threefold. First and foremost, the linking agent was viewed as a person with the time, information sources and resources to help people get what was needed to select and implement curricular innovation like this one. Second, as an outsider with no vested interest, she was viewed as having a degree of credibility that no insider could have. Third, and also as an outsider, she was in a position to bring an "objective force" to various tasks, to "keep people moving" and avoid "foot-dragging".

It is important to note that although there appeared to be no carry-over of the linear, rational problem solving process, in the Mitchell School, the role of the linking agent was one that was perceived as potentially useful, and probably indispensable in the future. For example, when asked if an inside person could perform the linking agent's role if time were specifically set aside for such activities, the area leader replied that only an outside linking agent would have the contacts with outside projects necessary to bring school staff and external resources together. She further stated that an outcome of the Consortium Project at Mitchell was that the staff would probably be much more positive in the future about making use of an outside person with time and resources to contribute.

Thus, it appears that what was identified at Mitchell as the key element in the process of change was not a model for problem solving, but rather an outsider with contacts, time and a perceived degree of political freedom within the building.

APPENDIX

Data Sources

Sources for this case study epilogue include interviews with the Consortium linking agent and with administrators and teachers at the school site, in addition to documents prepared during the three years of the project. The roles of the respondents and the documents are listed below.

Respondents (n=9)

Linking Agent
School Principal
Language Arts Area Leader (member of original DMG)
Grade 7 MIRP Teacher (member of original DMG)
Grade 9 MIRP Teacher (member of original DMG)
Grade 9 MIRP Teacher (initial involvement during Year Two)
Grade 7 MIRP Teacher (initial involvement during Year Three)
Grade 9 non-MIRP Teacher (participated in initial training)
Spanish Teacher (formerly teacher of English, member of original DMG)

Documents

"Two Case Studies: December, 1977 to June, 1978" by Ruth Anne Olson

"A Problem Identification Site Report" (n.d.)

"Implementation Plan" (n.d.)

Epilogue to Cramer Junior High School Case Study

Introduction

The uncertainty about district-wide decisions that characterized the closing months of Year Two of the Consortium Project in Cramer Junior High School persisted as a governing influence in Year Three. Although a resolution to the immediate question of Cramer's fate -- and with it the location and implementation of the Basic Reading Center Program (BRCP) -- was made shortly after the period covered in the earlier case study, it produced fundamental changes in the context and staffing of the project. As one might expect, these changes had a disruptive influence on the planned change process; yet despite this formidable influence, BRCP development and implementation continued. This underscores the importance of the linking agent as a force for continuity and persistence in attaining project goals under difficult circumstances.

This case study epilogue will update Consortium Project experiences in River City from the end of Year Two through May 1979 at the end of Year Three. It will also report on the fundamental changes in school context that resulted from the reduction in force and the Board of Education's decision to close the existing Cramer program. Finally, this epilogue will highlight the elements of those changes that had greatest impact on the Consortium Project and it will describe and comment upon the role and significance of the linking agent in the context of wide-ranging and disruptive change.

Despite the River City Board of Education's appeal of the federal judge's decision that the district must proceed rapidly to achieve full desegregation, it was ultimately decided to follow the plan that would convert Cramer into a K-8 "fundamental program" school by the fall of 1979. During the 1978-79 school year, students who would have entered the Cramer seventh grade were to be sent to Morse Junior High School, also in the north area of the city. In September 1979, the change would be completed by enrolling at Morse those students who previously were slated to enter Cramer's eighth grade.

In addition, over the two-year period, a substantial proportion of Cramer teachers would be transferred to Morse. Because of their seniority in the system, the Cramer teachers who would move to Morse (according to the linking agent, their service at Cramer ranged from ten to

twenty-five years) would do so by choice within the limited options available. As a consequence, although the Morse staff would increase in overall numbers, several of the Morse teachers with less seniority would be "bumped" from their positions in the school in the process. In the context of substantial declining enrollments and reduction in force for the district as a whole, it was also likely that some Morse teachers would be laid off in the process.

Faced with this overall decision about Cramer, it was now possible and necessary to decide what action to take concerning the Consortium Project. The alternative of trying to maintain the project at Cramer was finally eliminated when it became clear that the Cramer principal was also to be replaced by an administrator with greater seniority for the final year of the existing program's operation. Additionally the one teacher from the Decision Making Group (DMG) who was to stay at Cramer did not want to be involved in implementing BRCP. Since the majority of Cramer students -- along with their reading problems -- were to transfer to Morse, a decision was made to try to implement the program there. In addition, the Cramer English department chairperson who had remained active on the DMG throughout the process was to transfer to Morse as a regular English teacher in September 1978 and was still interested in seeing the project through.

In June 1978, the linking agent obtained initial approval for this idea from the area superintendent who saw the logic of having the program follow the students and believed the idea to have additional merit because "Morse hadn't had anything innovative." However, during the same month, the linking agent met with the Morse principal who was not willing to make a firm commitment at that point. Rather, he invited her to come to the school during the first two weeks in September to discuss the matter futher.

The School Context

Morse Junior High School is a large two-story building with corridors spread out over a fairly extensive area. It draws from a largely blue collar neighborhood and its racial composition is mixed. With the addition of Cramer's incoming seventh grade, its student body for 1978-79 numbered 550. With the inclusion of Cramer's eighth grade, its enrollment for 1979-80 was projected to reach 680. Informal observations of the students in the corridors, school yard, and office yield a picture of a student body that is physically active and often engaged in rough-housing or more serious fights.

Having had twenty-one teachers prior to the influx of new students, its staff grew to twenty-eight. For the 1979-80 school year, this number was projected to increase to thirty-nine, constituting an 86 percent increase in staff over a thirteen-month period.

The Morse administration consists of a principal and one assistant principal who are kept hopping with discipline and other daily problems. Although department heads and a reading coordinator are designated, they all have full teaching loads. The rapid growth in student population and staff size has made substantial demands on a principal and assistant principal who already had their hands full.

Apart from increases in the size of the staff, Morse is deeply affected by the staffing consequences of a substantial city-wide enrollment decline, a circumstance that affects all River City schools and one that is shaped by a state law governing procedures for handling reduction in force and staff lay-offs within the school systems of three large cities in the state. To understand what happened to the Consortium Project in Year Three, it is essential to be familiar with the consequences of reduction in force at Morse as a whole, and in the project's staffing in particular.

Estimates by Morse School staff of the number of teachers cut from district payrolls last year and this year are 456 and 209, respectively; the principal estimates this to constitute about 7 percent of the total previously employed teachers. According to statute, these cuts are to be made strictly according to seniority. As was evident in the case of the Cramer School principal, this law also applies to school administrators regardless of educational or managerial consequences. In addition, choice of school assignment is made by teachers in accord with seniority rules. Thus, the composition of Morse staff has seen and will continue to experience considerable change as a result of the choice of more senior Cramer teachers who opted to move to Morse.

Furthermore, when a position becomes available the central administration is required to contact laid-off teachers certified to fill the slot, in turn, until someone accepts the position. In the interim, a "long-call" substitute, also drawn from such a list, is hired to carry out the duties of the position. This process frequently takes several months, as was the case in efforts to hire a reading center teacher needed for implementing BRCP at Morse. This position was not filled with such a "long-call" substitute, but rather with another substitute until January 1979, thus delaying program implementation. Also, because the person then hired was low on the seniority ladder, it was expected that she would not

continue in the position the next year.

As one might expect, the general level of morale in such a situation was quite low, as was the probability of generating enthusiasm or even interest in a new or "innovative" program. Informal conversations among members of the teaching staff, as they ate their brown-bag lunches in the teachers' lounge, documented their sense of anomie. They work in an environment of uncertainty, in which major decisions are made using a procedure that precludes individual preferences or concerns. The conversation was characterized by amiability among the speakers and centered on who was or would be cut, who was called back for another uncertain year well after the present school year had started, and what the probabilities might be for another call-back in another year. A segment of the conversation follows:

> "It's going to get worse in the next five years."
>
> "A lot of people are looking elsewhere...You can't play this game indefinitely. You can't plan your life...You don't have health insurance...no security. They can't do this indefinitely. You have to do something else."
>
> "It's really depressing."
>
> "I really feel that (River City) is going through a crisis....It's taking attention away from the schools. The schools can really get bad in a hurry."

After this interchange an older teacher, perhaps aged sixty, talked about his alternatives in light of a recently announced financial plan developed to encourage early retirement:

> "I could have it nice -- take sick days, teach less, and take it easy for the next five years until retirement. (Laughs) I don't think many people will take the option of early retirement and take the cash bonus to leave now....If you figure percentage-wise, you lose over time because of the big tax bite and losing out on your pension and health benefits."

It is within this context of personnel changes and concomitant educational disruptions, then, that Year Three of the Consortium Project can be fairly viewed and understood.

The Process

At the very beginning of the Year Three academic calendar, the linking agent paid a visit to the principal of the Morse Junior High School at his request. With her was the former Cramer English department head, an active member of the original DMG and a regular in the Morse School. The principal insisted that the Morse reading coordinator be involved in the discussion and decision. From this and other "messages," this teacher decided to restrain her interest in the project; before long she had no further involvement with it. According to her:

> "I find myself getting so busy with English so that I figured, you know, so long as he handles the reading end of it....I just decided, my first year particularly, not to challenge anything which was existing, because it was apparent to me right at the beginning that...the reading coordinator was very highly respected by the principal and I was told several times, 'Well, that's the reading coordinator's responsibility. He'll handle that.' I just decided (sighs), so be it. Do my own little job in my own little corner....You really learn to kind of swing with it."

The English teacher's last involvement with the Consortium Project came at a fall 1978 meeting of approximately nine people, including members of the Title I, reading, and English staffs, that had been set up because of the linking agent's insistence on involving as many teachers as possible in the decision making process. Prior to the meeting, the reading coordinator and principal had agreed to the school's involvement in some sort of Consortium Project; but they wanted to take a look at several programs, rather than simply to pick up with the Basic Reading Center Program selected at Cramer. In advance of the meeting, the linking agent provided group members with information on several reading programs appropriate for the secondary school level. These programs were explained and the English teacher reviewed the previously determined reading needs of the transferred Cramer students; this dovetailed with diagnostic information that the reading coordinator had obtained from tests administered at the beginning of the 1978-79 school year.

Thus, there was no redefinition of the problem to be addressed by a program from the Consortium pool; the question became one of how to use the Consortium resources and funding. The reading coordinator advocated using the funds to purchase materials for a teacher resource room, from which teachers could borrow reading materials for use

in their own classrooms. This suggestion was not adopted; the reading coordinator reported that he did not know how a final decision was reached. Like the English teacher, his involvement with the project throughout the rest of the year was nil; to an observer, he communicated a sense of quiet resignation about the outcome.

Although it is not clear how a final decision was reached about a program, several circumstances external to the linear, rational decision making process appear to have been influential. First, with no decision made by November, the linking agent became concerned that the implementation funds (approximately $5,000) would not be used before the end of project funding in June 1979. Second, the school had been budgeted to have a new reading position and a room in a remote corner of the school had been designated for this person's use. A reading teacher had been hired but had virtually no materials to work with. Also, it became apparent that because of the lengthy recall procedure, this person would only be temporary in the Morse School. The Consortium funds that were available for materials, as well as the Basic Reading Center Program that had been selected by the Cramer DMG, apparently fit the situation; it was determined to go ahead with it. However, actual implementation was put off -- apparently at the linking agent's suggestion -- until January when the "final" long-call substitute was scheduled to join the Morse staff. Since training and materials selection were the initial steps to be taken, it seemed senseless to begin those with a person who would remain for only a few more weeks rather than wait a short time for a more permanent teacher.

Susan Bond, who was hired to fill the reading center position in January, was glad that they had waited for her arrival. She arrived to assume her duties and was simply given "the room and the students -- and that's all." The linking agent contacted her to offer help and to explain that time was pressing. A meeting was quickly set up for Bond with the director of dissemination of BRCP. The meeting was arranged and attended by the linking agent and the three looked at the program and what it had to offer in Susan Bond's particular situation. The BRCP representative pointed out specific materials and program aids that would be useful, with suggestions for how she might adapt them in her own classroom.

With the linking agent's help, requisitions for the materials selected were prepared and sent to the district office in January 1979. Ordering a piece of equipment central to program implementation was problematic, however, because of government authorization requirements for equipment purchasing. Materials began arriving in late February, but as of mid-May many materials were just coming

in -- including the critical piece of equipment. Throughout the spring, the linking agent maintained close contact with Susan Bond, coming to her classroom "about every other week and any time that I (Bond) call." On certain occasions, Bond asked the linking agent in to see the class and offer feedback on its operation. In addition, because the linking agent had known both the aides who worked in the reading center, Bond believed that the information the linking agent provided helped to "bridge the continuity."

The Product

Given the wide-ranging changes and disruptions that occurred between the identification of a reading problem by the Cramer DMG, their selection of BRCP to address this problem, and its implementation in the Morse School, there may be little sense in trying to gauge the product's effectiveness in relation to that originally defined problem. With the exception of the linking agent, no one involved in the early steps of the decision making process maintained any involvement with program implementation. Given the staffing change in the Morse reading center itself and the time frame for actually obtaining materials to implement BRCP, outcomes of the program could not be determined at the end of Year Three. As was understandably reported by Susan Bond, who must face several groups of students each day and provide them with work to do, she was less concerned with following the guidelines of a predetermined program than with using her own training to organize and use any and all materials she could get her hands on. In this connection, the most important part of the Consortium Project was the help provided by the linking agent.

Although an assessment of BRCP's effectiveness in addressing a problem defined by other people in another setting is neither logical nor possible, one can describe how the reading center program fit into the total reading program of the school, note the segment of students it reaches, and compare its operation to the program description of the BRCP developers.

At the beginning of each academic year, Morse students are administered a standardized test of reading achievement. Those students who fall below grade level (approximately 50, according to the principal) are divided into three groups according to the degree of their reading deficiency as measured by grade equivalent scores and by teacher judgments. Each group is assigned to one of the reading teachers and to different rooms for a program that

essentially replaces their regular English program. Although they are carried on the rosters of the English teachers, their grades are given by the reading teachers who actually work with them. This practice was viewed with some concern by the English teachers because the BRCP program selected at Cramer was intended to supplement the regular classroom work and maintain close contact with the regular English program and teachers.

Of the approximately fifty students in the school who were enrolled in the entire reading program, about thirty were assigned to Susan Bond -- a number which she said was "moderated by attendance," since absenteeism was high. The majority of students in her classes read at a third or fourth grade level, although, because of scheduling constraints, some sixth-grade level readers also appeared in her classes. For these students, Susan Bond employed a diagnostic-prescriptive method (consistent with the approach described in the BRCP awareness materials), and attempted to build responsibility and self-esteem in the youngsters by setting up a reward system and through her own way of dealing with them each day. She found the BRCP needs assessment and reading inventory materials particularly helpful and she generally employed the management system that the program includes. She made some minor modifications in the printed forms that youngsters work with to make them easier for students to use.

In general, then, the overall indiviualized, diagnostic-prescriptive BRCP method was being employed in the reading center, although the needs assessment instruments often turned up more needs than time allowed Bond to address. However, because of the slow process of getting materials -- particularly the critical piece of equipment that did not arrive until May, 1979 -- it was necessary to use any materials on hand for instruction. In addition, the extensive parent involvement called for in BRCP did not exist. Similarly, the ongoing teacher training described in BRCP developer material appeared to be absent. With respect to school-wide awareness of the program's existence, the English teacher reported that other teachers had little contact with it, in part because of the reading center's location in the building. "It's so remote that no one bothers to go over there." Although among the reading staff itself (including the reading coordinator who is also a full-time reading instructor) there was little familiarity with one another's programs, Susan Bond did make an effort to talk with regular classroom teachers about how her students were doing in their classes.

When interviewed in May, it was clear that the River City seniority system would preclude Bond's continuation with the program next year. She was slated for a lay-off and,

if recalled at some point, would not be returning to Morse. It was unclear who would fill her position and whether it would be filled by an experienced reading teacher or by a re-hired teacher "without a lot of choice or selection by the school." Bond also reported that no one would know until the end of August, 1979, whether the person hired would retain what Bond had begun in the reading center or select something else. In the face of these circumstances, Bond and the linking agent were determined to put their own effort into documenting the materials obtained with Consortium Project resources, as well as to prepare detailed information on how they were used during Year Three. Said Bond, "I want to leave something for posterity. We put a lot of work into it, and I want to see that someone can make good use of it."

The Role of the Linking Agent

During Year Three, the linking agent wore several hats, all of which were essential to survival of the Consortium Project in an environment of disruptive changes in locale, staffing, and the professional fate of individual actors. With the decision to phase out Cramer's program and with the loss of its principal, her first role was as a liaison with administrators and an advocate for continuation of the project. Having obtained approval from the area superintendent, it was then necessary to make contact and persevere with the Morse principal, who had more than enough to occupy his attention without taking on yet another task. As he described it, "She was really the liaison ... (Without someone in that role) it would have been very difficult, 'cause I'm a very busy man, and I just, you know, I'm trying to run a difficult school, and I can only do so much ... You really do need someone to stay on top of it."

The principal's perception of the critical role of the linking agent was echoed by the English teacher who indicated that she herself was so busy at the time of moving from one school to another that she wouldn't have had the time to follow through herself on a program adoption. Even if her original commitment to BRCP had prompted this teacher to raise the matter with the principal, her reactions to his "signals" -- that reading was the reading coordinator's responsibility -- would have surely put an end to her efforts. Although the linking agent was new to a school decribed by the area superintendent as never having had anything innovative, as an outsider representing a federally-funded project, her role still carried with it more political leeway to persevere with the principal than did the English teacher's.

After she had obtained the principal's agreement to continue the Consortium Project in some form, the linking agent had focused her role on adhering to the prescribed decision making process and arranging logistics and resources for the group of teachers who met in the fall. Given the lack of a firm decision from teachers preoccupied with many changes and uncertainties in their building, and given the reading coordinator's disaffection and low level of interest, it then fell to the linking agent to formulate recommendations on project implementation and see them through.

In January 1979, when a relatively "final" assignment was made to fill the reading center teacher position, the linking agent had a similarly essential role in ensuring the greatest possible degree of program implementation. In addition to providing logistical support to Susan Bond, arranging a meeting with the BRCP dissemination director, and helping to prepare and push through the materials requisitions, she gave instructional and moral support to the implementing teacher. Attesting to the importance of this function, Bond stated, "If I hadn't had (linking agent), I would have ignored it (the project) and gone about teaching the class. I wouldn't have had the time to spend the money." The critical function of the linking agent, and the relationship she built with the implementing teacher, were slated to carry through into the project they planned together: to organize and document the materials and their use in Year Three and enhance the likelihood of program continuation when another reading center teacher comes on board in the 1979-1980 school year.

In sum, then, in an environment characterized by tremendous upheaval and change, there were many points at which the Consortium Project would have fallen through the cracks and not even minimal BRCP implementation would have occurred. The role of the linking agent and her persistence were the essential ingredients that prevented this from happening.

APPENDIX

Data Sources

Data upon which this epilogue is based come from two sources: 1) interviews (conducted in May, 1979) with the Linking Agent and with teachers and administrators at the school site; and 2) documentary sources produced during the project's three-year life. Interviews were taped, unless such procedure was not approved by a given respondent. Below is a list of interview respondents, by role, followed by a list of the documents used.

Respondents (n = 16)

Linking Agent
Morse Principal
Morse Reading Coordinator
Former Cramer English department Head, Decision-Making Group Member, and present Morse English Teacher.
Morse Reading Teacher presently implementing Consortium Program.
Area Superintendent

Documents

Cramer Junior High School Case Study, May 1978
Problem Identification Site Report for Cramer J.H.S. (n.d.)
Consortium Adoption Agreement for Morse J.H.S., January, 1979
Consortium Product Development Descriptive Material for BRCP (pseudonym)
BRCP developer-prepared descriptive material

JEFFERSON ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CASE STUDY BY: Elliott Krause
Northeastern University
Boston, Massachusetts

EPILOGUE TO
CASE STUDY BY: Martha Stone Wiske
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Case Study of Jefferson Elementary School

I. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

Historical Background

Jefferson is a medium-sized New England community of approximately 19,000 people, located midway between (and about thirty miles from) each of two larger New England cities. Founded more than 200 years ago, the town grew from a predominantly agricultural period into a New England mill town at the time of the American industrial revolution (ca. 1850-1860). Immigration to Jefferson at that time, of poor people wanting jobs in the mills, began to change the ethnic composition of the community from all-Yankee to a mix of three groups: Yankee, Italian, and French-Canadian.

With the onset of the industrial growth of the South, much of this industry moved south, setting up a high unemployment situation which is still very much the main problem in town. Since the community is not even secondarily a commuting or bedroom suburb of middle and upper class professionals, the combination of a population without highly salable skills, semi-rural status and a declining economy in the region has led to a high joblessness factor; unemployment was estimated officially last year at 7.4% and this researcher believes it much more likely to be in the range of 10 to 15% of the employable population.

Today Jefferson is primarily a town of older Yankee families without much wealth and what one respondent called "failed ethnics," i.e., second generation Italians and Franco-Americans who were not financially successful enough to move out and up into the suburbs of the nearby metropolises. It has an insular feeling to this observer, and does not think of itself as a suburb or the outskirts of anywhere else. (The majority of the teachers in the subject school live either in town or in nearby communities of even smaller and more rural nature.) One respondent, a long-time resident and a retired city planning engineer (and a Yankee), summed it up this way:

> The town thinks of itself as itself, period. Cares about its football team, and little else. Hockey is very important also. Even for major shopping they don't go to the cities but to nearby larger towns. There are a few mills here -- Acme Films, and

> Wilson-MacPherson (hats). But most of the mills are now out of business. There are a few small sweat-shops. But no new space technology or electronics. Any further drop in the economy will absolutely kill this town.

The political structure of the town is a combination of Old Yankee and Italian, with no other group represented among the town officials. The government of the town is viewed by the respondents interviewed as extremely conservative politically, very tight on public spending. (There was some debate among school principals and the superintendent as to whether the money for schools was actually available.) Surely a rise in the tax rate would be hard to bear in this town, which is not rich in resources.

One final note. Though a small, private junior college exists in the town and opens its doors to town residents for cultural offerings, it is viewed by the town as an outsider, in that the majority of students are from New York and New Jersey. No major town-gown antipathy exists, and some economic support for the town is contributed by the college. But this researcher could find no evidence of town residents attending cultural events at the junior college, even for such celebrities as Ralph Nader; it appears that the junior college does not have a significant impact on the cultural life of the town. Not much does. I got caught one evening in town with no money but with a BankAmericard. Not one of the six small restaurants would touch it, and I had no dinner.

Educational Climate of the Town

My first interview took place in a restaurant on the outskirts of town. The respondent, a retired, liberal professional, gave this as my first introduction to the politics of education in Jefferson:

> The town ethos is anti-education and anti-intellectual and anti-school. They urge their kids to go quickly into unskilled employment, have not the patience or the trust in the money reward of education, and they point to unemployment among high school graduates as a reason for dropping out. Parents have demanded that their kids be able to leave junior high. There is a small professional class which works against the tide, but is not loud and vociferous and has no power in town. Because the town beat the teachers in the recent strike, there are going to be cutbacks, reductions in force, in the teaching staff. Some schools will be combined and some teachers fired.

The most important single sociological event in the two year change effort period being studied -- program choice (Year One) and program implementation (Year Two) -- was a teacher strike which took place after the first two weeks of school in Year Two and less than a month after the teachers had been trained to use the new reading program -- the Model Intensive Reading Program (MIRP). That is, the enmity between the school committee (representing the town) and the teachers grew, over Year One, and the teachers began Year Two without a contract. They struck for the last two weeks in September, 1977 (the beginning of Year Two) in a widely publicized strike which was covered on TV with regularity. They were taken to court by the town, fined, and some were imprisoned. They remained defiant. Finally, under the pressure of the Superior Court of the state, and under a court order to return, they decided to return to work and did so in the first week of October, 1977.

It would be wrong to draw immediate conclusions on the consequences and ramifications of the strike for the change effort attempted. For example, take the issue of solidarity in struggle. There were nine elementary schools in Jefferson during 1977-1978, in which there was varying degrees of support for the strike. The Jefferson School was the largest of these, had the greatest unanimity in favor of the strike, and had the principal who seemed closest to his teachers and supportive of their actions before, during, and after the strike.

Furthermore, the superintendent of the system, according to a case study done of Year One, had a long record of unilateral decision-making. The linking agent, Ms. Hartwell, had worked with the district and/or this superintendent in a previous project, and he, the superintendent, was seen by some to have mandated the adoption of a variant of a reading innovation for his entire school system at the elementary levels, and then told principals and teachers about it. (Editor's note: after preparation of this report, the linking agent reported that the superintendent did not mandate this decision; rather, the principals approached the superintendent asking him to approve its adoption.) In describing another such decision made by the superintendent, concerning the remodelling of the internal architecture of the Jefferson School, an earlier case study of Year One -- the decision-making year -- comments as follows:

> While there is little information in the site data which documents the school's transition to open space, there is much to suggest that the school's open

> structure has been and continues to be a significant source of concern to the staff and to the community. The open space concept was apparently mandated by the central office and although there have been workshops and in-service activities to help staff and students adjust, the lack of walls and the problems which their absence is believed to create continues to be an issue, three years after the change was initiated.

Note that the superintendent is pro-innovation but dictatorially so. Another example had to do with the previous relationship which the Jefferson school system had with the Linking Agency. Prior to Year One, the superintendent had approached the Linking Agency to train a number of Jefferson teachers in a new reading program being adopted in the district. The superintendent decided which schools were and were not going to participate. Jefferson School was put into and then withdrawn by the superintendent. A case study on the school's educational background preceding Year One of the present project comments:

> The foregoing sketch of the Consortium's early involvement with Jefferson contains an example of the most persuasive problematic condition at the site when the intervention began: programmatic changes which affected people at all levels of the system and in the community occurred as a result of highly centralized decision-making in the absence of adequate communication among all levels of the system. Thus, the school's teachers were into and out of the training (for the reading program) before they knew it. And the principal of the school was <u>notified</u> that the school had been selected to participate in the Consortium.

(Editor's note: The linking agent reported that this was not a unilateral decision of the superintendent's. She stated that Jefferson's principal knew his school would have to withdraw from the first program adoption if Consortium participation came through and that this would not be known until after training for the first program had taken place.)

In summary, the Jefferson School context is as follows: an anti-education working class community with limited resources, growing alientation between teachers and school administration, a long and ugly strike carried out and lost by a group of teachers at the beginning of the implementation year, a principal who sided with his teachers during the strike to the point where what the principal, and the linking agent, viewed as an already distant relationship between the superintendent and this

principal might be further affected, all of this in a town that now hated its teachers.

II. THE SCHOOL

In this section, we will consider the organizational context of the Jefferson School: a small physical plant with a well-knit social fabric, run by a principal well-liked by the majority of his teachers. I will consider the school under the following headings: a) The physical plant and its sociological implications, b) the organizational structure of the Jefferson School c) the students, d) the teachers, and e) the overall social climate of the school.

The Building

The school plant was completed about 1900, in the square, two-storied shape so very familiar to those who have seen small elementary schools of this vintage. The older windows, being high, admit plenty of light. Extensive remodelling took place about a decade ago, and further modifications, including the tearing down of old walls and the creation of open areas for "open education," took place in 1975. Problems were created with this last action, which were still in evidence at several staff meetings observed by this researcher. These included the continuing resentment toward the central school administration which made the unilateral decision to tear down the walls and the ongoing problems involved with noise resulting from the open space plan.

A well-lighted and cheery cafeteria is on the ground floor, and the chef invites children to help on special occasions (such as making the stuffing and preparing the turkey for the school pre-Thanksgiving dinner). The administrative offices are small and cozy, and the principal does not have specially large or luxurious accommodations. Halls are carpeted, as are many schoolwork areas, and the place has a bright and cheerful feel to it. The first and the second floor have a series of rooms opening off a central hall, with the side walls of the classrooms now removed as part of the "open space" modification. The architectural firm did a competent but not "super-modern" job in fixing the place up. There is little playground space outside the school. Students often use a nearby field belonging to a private junior college, by arrangement between the principal (who teaches a course in the Foundations of Education department there) and the junior college.

Organizational Structure

Jefferson School's organizational structure is simple, as befits a small school, with the principal, one full-time secretary, a small special education staff, a full-time nurse, the teachers and the custodian. The principal also administers two extremely small schools in town in addition to the 1-6 Jefferson School he heads; both have only grades 1-4. Two of the three teachers in one of these small schools and two of four in the other were involved in the curricular improvement program this case study is examining. Each of the other schools has an acting head (a senior teacher) working directly under the Jefferson School principal. Both the other schools are scheduled for closing next year with teachers to be reassigned to the Jefferson or to other schools in the district. Lack of time on my part made it possible to do field observation only in the main school.

Students

In my classroom observations, and hallway observations at period-changing times, I found students on the whole quiet, well-dressed, and lively, looking comfortably at home. According to the principal, on the average students come from a lower socioeconomic background than average in the town, which must, therefore, place quite a few in the unskilled working class and/or in welfare homes. I saw almost no black faces in a student body of approximately 600. Some teacher discussion in observed staff meetings had to do with some common, and relatively minor, discipline problems, such as toilet-stuffing and card-gambling. In general the children were seen conversing happily with teachers in the lunchroom and a sense of regimentation was not in evidence.

Teachers

Through observations and interviews by this researcher, the majority of the twenty-five teachers in the Jefferson School (this number includes the two small schools) seem to be highly motivated to teach and to teach well, enthusiastic and have a sense of solidarity, in part because of the camaraderie of the strike action and in part because they liked working with the principal. Most were either local residents or lived nearby to the town; almost none commuted from the major cities or their suburbs about thirty miles away. The teachers had a feeling for the community and felt they belonged in it. When that same community turned on them, refused to grant them any raises and dared them to strike, many felt betrayed; teachers were even more upset by the wave of

community hostility that followed. Many are married to locals and do not have the option of moving. Not a highly cosmopolitan group professionally (most teachers had never heard of the innovative reading programs when the linking agent first presented them), they do as a group seem to have a real dedication to teaching, and did spend the large number of extra homework hours required by MIRP during the implementation of the program in Year Two.

The majority (17 of 25) of teachers in the Jefferson School participated in the adoption of MIRP: two-thirds of all teachers in the school used MIRP in Year Two (1977-1978), the first year of implementation. The effect for many was that the whole school was doing it, and those not were the ones feeling left out. The choice to participate was voluntary in Year One, but once choice was made and training completed in the summer between Year One and Two, no new ones could join, though several expressed interest.

Climate of the School

In general, the school climate was one of relaxed group mutual support. The various role groups on the scene -- principal, office secretary, teachers, students, special support staff and linking agent -- knew each other on first name terms, seemed comfortable and able to kid one another, and were also able to work constructively together. In the staff meetings and informal interactions which I observed, the teachers were able to challenge the principal if they disagreed with him, as well as to ask his help on special problems. Given the social history of the educational system in the community (see Section I), it may be that this school, with its very close principal-staff relations before, during and after the strike, might well be an oasis and <u>not</u> typical of such relationships elsewhere in the school system.

III. CONSORTIUM PROCESS: THE JEFFERSON EXPERIENCE

Jefferson School provides an example of what can be done to introduce an innovation successfully under what might look, at first glance, to be very difficult conditions. While the highlights of the Jefferson story will be presented in the pages that follow, they cannot do justice to the amount of time and effort put in by administrative staff, teachers, and the Consortium Project linking agent, who in the main kept their eyes fixed on the needs of children during all the chaos around them.

This historical review is divided into the following

sections: Entry into the Jefferson School System, The Process of Problem Identification, The Politics of Selecting an Innovation, The Summer Training Experience, The Strike of Late September, 1977, Immediate Aftermath of the Strike: Impact on the Model Intensive Reading Program (MIRP), The Fall Months of Year Two, Spring: Evaluation and Planning Time, and The Superintendent and Long-Term Support for MIRP, as of June 1978.

Entry into the School System: Year One (1977-1978)

The Linking Agency had previous contact with the Jefferson school system through its relationship with the assistant superintendent in a project which specialized in training administrators for progressive work in education. This administrator, however, left the Jefferson system at the start of Year One of the present project. Entry groundwork was an immediate need. This was done at the start of Year One by Ms. Hartwell, the Consortium Project linking agent. This extensive quote is from the Consortium project director's case study of activity during Year One:

> Her (linking agent's) contact reports indicate that a meeting was held with the superintendent during the first week in September, 1976. It was designed to ensure that there would be district level support for the project and that there would be a way to ensure central office input to the work that she would be doing with the Jefferson School.
>
> The new Jefferson reading coordinator for the district was designated the central office's representative to the Consortium, and the superintendent arranged for appropriate release time for teachers who would be involved with the project. Thus the groundwork was laid for district-level commitment to the Consortium, and one member of the multiconstituent Decision Making Group that she was to assemble had been identified.
>
> In the first week of September, 1976, Hartwell (linking agent) also met with the principal and the reading specialist for the (target) school, and made a presentation to the entire faculty, explaining the Consortium and how they could become involved. On September 14, following a short presentation to the Board of Education by the superintendent, the principal, and the reading coordinator, the Board agreed to participate in the program, and her (linking agent's) goal of establishing formalized legitimacy for her work in the Jefferson School had been established.

One of the linking agent's first acts was the creation of a Decision Making Group or DMG. This DMG was the group she would use as a bridge between herself and the school, and would be the group that she would use to review the innovative reading programs available for adoption, during Year One, to decide on one for use in Jefferson. Once that decision was made, the Decision Making Group would remain in existence during Year Two (1977-1978) as a project monitoring group.

The issue of makeup of the group -- who would be on it -- was discussed early in October 1976 by the linking agent and the principal. They chose parent representatives (one recommended to the group by the principal who chose from those active on the Title I Parent Advisory Council plus one in the community who volunteered after reading about it in the papers), teacher representatives, and the distict reading coordinator, as well as the reading specialist from the school. One point should be made immediately: while Title I and other special services staff did not participate on the DMG, there was no real gulf between them and regular staff. In addition, supportive representation from the central office staff was also present on the Decision Making Group. Given the complex political ramifications of their eventual choice of reading innovation (discussed in Section IV below), this well balanced Decision Making Group had a valuable role to play.

To sum up, in the opening months the linking agent took the small contact which the Linking Agency had in the past with the system and immediately proceeded to get sanction and to establish a bridgehead in the target school. By late October, 1976 of Year One this task had been accomplished.

The Process of Problem Identification

This researcher's observations and studies of the field indicate that an innovation ordinarily is adopted by administrative fiat or by brief discussion. What made the process of adoption interesting in Jefferson was the length of time taken in this deliberation process. The linking agent's role during the entire first school year (1976-1977) was to work with the Decision Making Group (DMG) to carry out a needs assessment of the school's reading program, identify problems, and then to review a series of potential reading innovations. A broad list of 30 R&D products used by the Consortium as a pool of field-tested programs was narrowed down to seven rather quickly, but by then the process had slowed down as Ms. Hartwell, the linking agent, began to go "in depth" to see what their problems were. The Year One case study observes:

> During the problem identification phase the linking agent was faced with two recurring problems: the press for closure and the demand for products. In resisting the press for closure, the linking agent would not accept the fairly common group dynamic of appearing to agree in order to avoid a disagreement. If the linking agent heard or even sensed that people weren't in agreement on some facet of the problem identification process, she would identify what she thought was the source of the confusion and ask the group to discuss it. This process, while a source of frustration to the participants...was identified (by them) as ultimately beneficial.

Between the beginning of November, 1976 and May 16, 1977, the linking agent met 10 times with the Decision Making Group and she visited classrooms in this school and the two smaller ones. She also met with the entire faculty of the school twice. Following the problem identification phase, the choice of a reading innovation was narrowed to three: Individualized Reading System, Reading Improvement Program (RIP), and Model Intensive Reading Program (MIRP). Filmstrips, tapes, texts and materials were reviewed during the winter and early spring by the DMG along with the linking agent. Finally, the choice of MIRP was made. One observation should be made here. The linking agent was quite aware that relative to most school curricular change efforts, more time than usual was being spent on the issue of problem identification before the alternatives were investigated. To celebrate the achievement of consensus on what the problem was, she broke out a bottle of wine, midway through Year One, to celebrate this with the group. In so doing, she attempted to establish a personal bond to this group.

The Politics of Program Selection

A somewhat complex political situation (including the previous history of the Linking Agency as an actor in the district) was a factor in the eventual choice of the MIRP innovation. We have previously presented a discussion of the system superintendent's unilateral decision making. The previous year, before the beginning of the Consortium project, the Linking Agency had been involved with the Jefferson school system in the choice of a system-wide adoption of the Reading Improvement Program (RIP). This was being implemented, or at least had been ordered to be implemented, by the superintendent at all town schools except the Jefferson Elementary School. The superintendent took the Jefferson School out of the RIP adoption process as soon as it became clear that through a federally funded

project [illegible]e Linking Agency wanted to review this and many other programs in a chosen district school (the Jefferson), and provide extra money for staff training. This was the reason why the school was put into and then taken out of RIP, leaving a bad taste in the mouth of the principal. Then, two-thirds of the way through the problem identification and program selection process of Year One of the present project, RIP became a finalist. Both it and MIRP now had political overtones: would one be chosen because the other was the "superintendent's choice"? Would the superintendent's choice be selected to make it easier for teachers to transfer to the town's other schools, all of which were using RIP? The linking agent discussed these issues with the Decision Making Group because she did not want a situation in which one was chosen for reasons having more to do with political reaction than perceived need.

In addition, MIRP was not a personal favorite of the linking agent, who remarked to me that she would not want her own child in an MIRP class. But she took a professional neutrality toward the program and pushed for a fair consideration of it even when it looked like the teachers did not like it on paper. This all changed, though, when in the spring of Year One they visited an MIRP school in a nearby state and saw the enthusiasm of children and teachers. Once the site visit for MIRP was made, the DMG was near-unanimous in recommending it to the full faculty.

The long-term implications of the choice of MIRP may not become apparent until Year Three, the second year of implementation. The town's elementary schools did redistrict and there were staff firings. We will discuss this in the concluding section of the report.

The Summer Training Experience

Seventeen teachers out of 25 in the Jefferson School chose to be participants in the MIRP program through signing up to be trained in MIRP techniques at the end of August, a week for which they were paid a small honorarium, $40/day. At this time, the end of August, the strike was brewing since the Jefferson teachers had still not signed a contract with the school system and had been told they would receive no raises at all, not even a cost-of-living increase.

The 17 teachers were trained at a motel on the outskirts of town along with the teachers from another school in the Consortium Project which had also chosen MIRP. The five days of training were intensive. Jefferson teachers in general commented on their experience with a mixture of interest and apprehension at what they might be getting

themselves into:

> The summer training was excellent -- packed with information. But it was also mind-boggling and anxiety-producing because so much was to be done in a short time to implement programs.

In general, the teachers felt that the taining was an introduction. The major early problem with implementation was that not only was the Consortium linking agent not a reading expert, though she was an expert at getting programs going, but also experienced MIRP trainers were to visit the school only a few times later in the year. In addition to affecting the implementation of the program, this also added problems to the role ambiguity of the linking agent later in the year. But shortly after the training, less than two weeks after the beginning of school, the most important event of the year took place -- the strike.

The Jefferson Teachers Strike: Causes and Consequences

We have previously described the town's attitude toward education, especially the financing of it, and the implications for teacher salaries should be clear. In addition, the superintendent of the system has had a somewhat heavy handed administrative style and the decline in enrollments was probably going to lead to some firings and redistricting in any case. What touched the strike off was first, the continuing refusal of the town to give the teachers even a cost of living increase -- in effect to maintain their real income in a time when inflation was rising 7% a year minimum -- and second, the town's additional refusal to give the teachers a contract. For the teachers, members of the state educational association which is in turn a member union of the NEA, a strike had been brewing in the background during the summer of 1977, and shortly after the beginning of school it happened.

Two facts are of critical importance in contrasting the Jefferson School and others in the town. The first is that the teachers of the Jefferson School were more solidly cohesive in support of the strike than teachers in other schools, and second, that of all the principals in the system, the principal of this school was most supportive of his teachers, so much so that in his own words, "After this is over I'll expect to get shit from the superintendent for some time to come." In her contact reports (records of a visit to the school) written at the time, the linking agent observed:

> Of course, top on everyone's mind was the breakdown in

> negotiations and the impending strike. People are afraid of a strike -- of the strike lasting a long time and their jobs being jeopardized. They said it was not yet affecting MIRP -- people are trying the program, having good results, etc. -- but a few people did say things like "Why should I do this much work without a contract?"
> (September 13, 1977)

The strike hit the papers and other media heavily, especially because the town and the teachers were both intransient. Finally, a state superior court judge ordered the teachers back to work, the town refused to consider any raise, and several teachers went to jail. But in all of this, the school principals acted as mediators, and among them, the one with the strongest rapport with his staff was Sam Porter, the principal of the Jefferson School.

The strike "won" by the town, was over on the week of September 30, 1977. Note the following contact report entry by the linking agent Hartwell:

> Sam called to say the strike is over and could I come down to "pick up the pieces." I said that's a little heavy but I'd like to do what I can. He'd like to see MIRP become "a vehicle for getting things back to normal again." I agreed to come down next Tuesday -- "as soon as possible," and just visit teachers, check in with people, etc., Sam would like to talk to me and we'll try to set up a meeting for the week of the 10th.

In a phone call just after the strike, the principal confided in his friend, Ms. Hartwell the linking agent, about his own role and that of the principals (incidentally showing the rapport he and the linking agent had with one another):

> He said it has been a devastating and exhausting experience and especially so for the principals upon whom both sides have vented their anger and upset. He said it was a very lonely position and that he had almost called to ask me to visit the principals at the court house (they spent 8 days in court!). I told him I'd wanted very much to be supportive, called once or twice, but he was in court.

The teachers had shown their understanding for his rather difficult position, caught between the teachers, the central administration and school committee:

> (After the strike) he said a dozen teachers showed up on his doorstep at 7:30 this morning and there was a lot of hugging. Then at school a news photographer

> took pictures of Sam hugging Betty Walters and Susan Smith returning to school. He said teachers by and large have been great toward him although there was this gap between principals and teachers.

The strike that may very well have poisoned relationships within many schools in the system -- between principal and staff, between striking and non-striking factions in a school faculty -- worked in the Jefferson School to produce even greater solidarity against the outside world. Thus, Jefferson teachers came out of the strike a cohesive group; almost all the teachers in this school went out on strike with the principal's support and with his empathic understanding since he has his own role as primary bargainer for the town's principals with the same school committee. In the long run, the standing of the principal with the higher administration may have suffered, precisely because of his constructive attitude toward his own staff. But I can't say that for sure. What is certain, however, is that the staff came out of it far better than might be expected and determined to do their work in spite of having lost the strike battle (the school committee later gave the teachers a 4% raise they had originally promised, which was not the amount the teachers were striking for and which was, of course, a pay cut given the 6%-7% increase in cost of living).

The Fall: Implementing the MIRP Program

In my field notes and interviews, it is clear that MIRP did become a focus for getting back-to-business in the Jefferson School and in effect also acted as a kind of occupational therapy. The principal, who was in favor of the innovation and liked the linking agent, was even more predisposed to push it; the majority of teachers was involved in implementing MIRP and it gave everyone something beside the strike to talk about (also to complain about: the extra time involved amounted to two to four extra hours per day in preparing the handwritten charts needed for the program). By November 20, 1977, two and a half months into the innovation, the principal was noting some feedback from parents (indicating some impact of the program and some contact between parents responding to MIRP thus far). He observed:

> The speed, the words per minute that they read. Parents want to know why, especially the stopwatches... I get nice comments. They are seeing better handwriting and reading, and I get comments like, "My kid wants to spell and read at home..." Also, I have a local grocer, who always wants to comment on the school

-- he doesn't like the walls, he doesn't like this, that, you know -- now, he doesn't want his kids transferred out of the school, now that it has MIRP.

In a series of field observations, I discovered that the MIRP program is a combination of basic instruction in reading and a hyperactive attitude toward instruction, directly applying the operant condition theory of B. F. Skinner. While the children seem to enjoy it to a point, at least some of the teachers seem haggard and the non-reading, non-spelling-out-loud parts, where the children are supposed to work silently, went less well; students were seen to be paying no attention to these tasks, requiring constant teacher pressure to keep them focused. In addition, the teachers varied in the extent to which they applied the program. I believe it is not that they were lax in doing so, but rather that they misunderstood the thinking behind some of MIRP's positive reinforcement approach. In turn, the approach was calculated as teacher-proof, that is, unspoilable by application on site. Yet there are problems, such as the teacher's lack of familiarity with the subject matter, or a trivial and mechanical application of the procedures (which may also be the case with regular work by the same teacher). Take these notes, on spelling and word meaning:

(There is noise)

Teacher: I like the people who are quiet and who let me speak to the others... (In a slightly menacing tone) When you're quiet I <u>love</u> it, I <u>love</u> it (she pounds on the desk and points)

The above is supposed to be discipline through positive reinforcement. More typical is this interaction:

Teacher: You will learn to read a new word by adding ed. The word is stack.

Kids: (in unison) Stack!

Teacher: Sound ed as in T, Sound!

Kids: T!

Teacher: The new word is. . .

Kids: Stacked!

I would go nuts teaching this way, but the kids seem to like it. The linking agent's views of MIRP changed over time, from initial objections to what she saw as rigid programmed learning, to later acceptance and support of the program.

By December 1977 of Year Two, the program was well-institutionalized in the Jefferson School. In fact, since the principal was to be the head of a new combined school and since he was known as favoring MIRP, a few teachers I interviewed began to view interest in MIRP, faked if not real, as a potential tool for job survival, since the announcement had been made informally by midyear that the principal was planning an all-MIRP school. (I was reminded of the dynamics in the old Sheperd Mead comedy musical, "How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying," in which you develop an interest in goldfish if the boss likes goldfish.)

Additionally, since MIRP teachers were the majority in the Jefferson School, by midyear some teachers not in the program reported feeling like outsiders, hearing so much about the program through both the positive and the negative comments of MIRP teachers. Some of these non-MIRP teachers were happy with their outsider status, others not.

Midway through the first implementation year, on January 25, 1978, I asked the Jefferson MIRP teachers, "How would you compare your experience of the program in its first month of use, following the August training, with the way you use it, and feel about it, today?" Among their responses are the following:

> Totally inundated with work, and confused. I feel better about it now but have not fully mastered the daily schedule. I still feel that it consumes a lot of "energy" -- the teacher feels sapped of energy if covering all fronts.
>
> I was overwhelmed by the workload in the beginning. My insecurity with the program initially was disconcerting. Now I have my workload under control and I am quite confident with the MIRP methods.
>
> I feel more secure in the program at the present time but there are too many facets of the program to be ironed out. (These are being done gradually but I feel I am still floundering.)
>
> During the first month I was much more confused and less confident than now, but now it seems a natural way to teach and test mastery.

> I feel more confident. I am more organized and have had time to prepare ahead so I don't feel so pressured with the required workload, which is quite heavy. I hope next year, the work will be further reduced.
>
> I've come to enjoy using MIRP. I spend much less time in preparation now (approximately 1 hour per day) than during the first month (2-3 hours per day). I've become more proficient in the MIRP technique and now can incorporate creative writing skills in the program much more than before.

In general, MIRP is a high commitment, total push reading instruction program with heavy time and energy demands on teachers. In the Jefferson School, it was implemented by a bunch of teachers who were committed to their principal and to the program, but who showed signs at midyear of being a little tired. Given less commitment and energy, this kind of demanding program, in my opinion, would fall flat on its face.

A second major sociological occurrence of Year Two was the growing role diffusion of the linking agent. She was central to the action in Year one, working with the Decision Making Group to identify problems in reading and choose a program and then in setting up the August training. She had an important role early in Year Two, the first implementation year in the immediate post-strike period, helping the principal and the teachers get started implementing MIRP. But she was not a reading expert and had only limited funds to hire such to come to Jefferson with specific advice for teachers having problems. When she <u>did</u> invite them, she sat on the sidelines looking a little bored and puzzled, not sure what she could do to help. Two viewpoints can illustrate this.

First, when teachers were asked midway through Year Two to describe the role of the linking agent, all were generally positive but tended to say things like, "<u>Last</u> year she did this and that but this year, I'm not sure what she does." Here in the same vein is a comment by the linking agent herself, in her own notes, describing a day she invited a reading expert into the school:

> I find myself somewhat uncomfortable in these events because my role is so unclear. I don't have much to <u>do</u>, so it's very like a cocktail party where I have to think up things to talk to people about. I'm not too good at that.

While the immediate event the linking agent is speaking of is a party given by a parent representative to the Decision Making Group, the point is that during this time, and in interviews with me, she was trying to cope with the changed

role she now had, much in the way parents have to change their role vis-a-vis their child as the child grows into a teenager; during the interim some confusion is inevitable.

The project kept going on its way and by late February and early March the linking agent had established a new role for herself -- program evaluator. That is, she began working with the teachers and the principal on ways of evaluating the progress of the kids using the MIRP program. The payoff for the teachers, as many made clear, was student performance increase on reading tests (even though there is some evidence that this takes more than one year to happen); they had put in long and extra hours. The linking agent's second role became that of planning with the DMG and the principal for a second implementation year (Year Three of the program) and beginning to work out the details of this. on the 16th of February, 1978 the principal told the linking agent that he had put in a request to the central office for $1,950 to train new teachers in MIRP for Year Three, including $750 for a trainer and $300 for MIRP materials. That night the budget was to go to the school committee. By February 23rd, Principal Porter was telling the DMG: "We're going to have to fight <u>real hard</u> to get more money for training for next year."

By early March, the issues of who would be teaching where, and who would not have a job, were getting more serious. Some teachers had heard about all the extra work that MIRP involved, and that Sam was planning an all-MIRP school, this in the light of the Jefferson School being one of the few possibilities for school positions given the budget cutbacks. The linking agent and another principal in the system were planning to write a paper comparing the adoptions of two reading programs in the district: MIRP and RIP. The linking agent reported one teacher saying this about the plans to write the paper, especially the interviewing of teachers on their attitudes:

> Susan is very uptight about this effort. She thinks the interviews might be threatening and disruptive and thinks people are generally paranoid what with the past strike and impending reorganization. There are 8-9 people not yet settled for next year and it might be best to wait until they are. We agreed to wait until April and Susan will put out tentative feelers. She thinks people will say whatever will put them in a good light. I brought up fear of MIRP and she said that's definitely present.

In the middle of March, 1978, at the parent-teacher open house, the Jefferson School principal and the MIRP teachers showed videotapes of the program in action to an appreciative audience of about fifty parents who came out

in a thick pea soup fog to see the program. But I had a sense of energy lost, of more of a routine feeling to the statements of the teachers. And the enmity of the town, the tight fistedness of the school committee, and the superintendent's conservatism led to this observation by the linking agent, late in April, on that request for money to train extra teachers in MIRP for Year Three:

> Sam (the principal) told the group that though he'd asked for $1,950 to train five new teachers (of his) in MIRP, the summer budget was for only $1,000 for all the elementary schools. We agreed that he and I and Dorothy (the district reading director) should talk to the Superintendent.

By the middle of May most of the meetings of the Decision Making Group were concerned with the nature of the evaluation results, how complete they needed to be, and what the school committee might want with them. Apparently experiences with MIRP in other districts indicate that scores may go down the first year, but through observations of project meetings in the spring and a study of the evaluation design, I had the sense that in this system quick positive results were wanted not only by the committee but also by the principal and the teachers. There were also beginning to be small rumbles of discord. For example, at the end of a meeting in mid-May, one person brought up the idea of dissolving the Decision Making Group, an idea most responded to with horror since to them the DMG is the program. Small indications of waning commitment appeared: half the teachers did not want to take one day in the second summer for advanced training, requesting instead a free day during the following school year.

When the principal and the linking agent visited the superintendent in mid-May 1978, to ask for extra training money, the linking agent reacted to the visit this way (report actually dictated in mid-June):

> The meeting with (superintendent) was very annoying largely because he's always trying to get more money and he never has enough money and I don't believe that there is any commitment from the central office towards this program. I think the teachers here have just really put themselves out in working to make this program go and I see them getting very little encouragement or acknowledgement from the central office. Also I feel a little ripped off since I keep forcing more and more (Consortium) money into the adoption and they keep weaseling out of their share.

On June 5, the last big meeting was held, at which the linking agent fed back the evaluation results from the

children. The sense I get from talks and notes is that the enthusiasm of the beginning months has been diluted somewhat. In addition, personal concerns of the principal had apparently been affecting his ability to set up the little meetings and arrangements that the linking agent had been planning on for the last few weeks of the school year. In general, the year ended with plans by most teachers to use MIRP in Year Three, for the principal to have a predominantly MIRP school, and for the superintendent to give little or no support to widening the adoption of the program elsewhere in the system except in the Jefferson School. Elsewhere in the system, the adoption of RIP had been met with lukewarm acceptance at best. "Given the chance, most of them would drop it tomorrow" was the remark noted by the linking agent. Thus MIRP succeeded in being institutionalized in this school.

IV. DECISION MAKING ROLES

In few projects that I have observed have the personalities and the social context history been so important. The superintendent tended to be dogmatic and somewhat dictatorial in his operations and was able to get away with this because the town itself, due to its low opinion of education, basically didn't care how happy the principals or teachers were. All indications are that the superintendent was not liked by principals, especially Sam Porter, and was not liked by the linking agent. On the other hand, he was caught between the school committee and the staff. But even when he sought to introduce educational innovations, it was carried out dictatorially -- you will innovate, etc. -- and he tried whenever possible to get someone else (the Linking Agency's Consortium Project in this case) to pay the whole bill. But, given the tight dollar attitude of the school commmittee, who could blame him? According to many, the superintendent was even less impressed with Porter than with the other principals, given Porter's quasi-union bargainer status for the principals and his pro-teacher attitude on the strike. This may very well have affected the degree of support he was willing to give Porter or any of his (Porter's) pet projects. Remember Porter's line early in the year ("I expect to get shit from the superintendent for some time to come.").

Sam Porter, the Principal of the Jefferson School, was a likeable, stocky, outgoing, almost back-slapping sort of guy, warm in personality, openly liked by his staff, almost all of whom were female. He was friendly and considerate to me and to the linking agent, he was businesslike, was not defensive about criticism, he did like kids and he did want MIRP to work. This kind of support made the program go.

Ms. Hartwell, the linking agent, has always struck me as a serious, no-nonsense sort of person who is not quick to smile -- prim almost -- yet she can smile and is a genuine person with genuine interest in the people with whom she works. After the strike was over, for example, she sent a bouquet of flowers for the returning teachers. In her contact report at that time, she said that she worried if it was too sappy or gushy to do this, but note that she did it. The teachers appreciated it and you could see the rapport she had with them at meetings; she was genuinely accepted not just as a co-worker but as a friend. Originally she and I did not get on well, partly because of the very intrusive nature of this kind of research, partly because of her protective possessiveness of her site and her worry I might upset things, and partly because her own time on site was so limited. We resolved that successfully, and her detailed case notes have been invaluable for the analysis.

Her strategy in this case was to work with the supportive principal but to try to distance herself somewhat so that she did not get identified strictly with him, to allow herself to stay on the sidelines if there really wasn't that much to do, and to find new tasks and roles as the project went on. She was meticulous in keeping the project on the tracks, and effective in truly institutionalizing the program in the target school. I have to give high marks here, especially as an old OEO/CAP training and technical assistance consultant; I have a feel for how difficult it is to move systems. Then, on top of that, we have presented the at times difficult context in which she was working.

The parents were an important element in the innovation. The principal had a policy of involving and encouraging their participation in school programs, such as the Title I Advisory Council, and volunteering was well established before MIRP. MIRP parent volunteers were part of his plan. In addition, he went out of his way to choose the most active parents for the Decision Making Group, and they made a significant contribution to the choice process; one parent in particular used her home for dinners and open-house meetings, which added to the camaraderie of the DMG. Note that the parents involved with the Jefferson School were not typical of those in the community, in so far as their attitudes toward education and educators were concerned.

The teachers were remarkable to me, in the sense of their non-pettyness in the face of so much hostility. I think that their willingness to resist taking out their frustration on the kids, and instead to use MIRP as a vehicle for letting off steam, helped here. A simple Machiavellian hypothesis that they were working on MIRP

this hard just to please Sam Porter and hold onto their jobs for next year does not seem to me to be correct here.

In general, the individuals and groups immediately involved in the project were dedicated, energetic, and worked as a team, counteracting the unfriendly and unsupportive context and making the program work during its first year of implementation. For the future we can now turn to overall conclusions.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The Consortium Project in the Jefferson School was a clear case of a successful implementation of an educational innovation in a target school. The nearly textbook manner in which the original year's work was carried out was nearly blown out of the water by the strike. However, the particular school chosen for the innovation was much more socially integrated than the majority of schools in the town, and withstood the strain of the strike as a cohesive unit, especially a teacher/principal unit. Since the principal was strongly identified with MIRP, and known to be at odds with his own superintendent, the school-against-the-world unity began to make the program possible this year.

On the other hand, precisely the lack of support of the upper administration, with I think some real grudge bearing against Sam Porter, led by the end of Year Two to no real support at all for Year Three for these hardworking teachers and this successful implementation. This will have an impact on morale in Year Three; the lack of support which the upper administration has for MIRP and for the principal identified with it may limit severely its implementation in the rest of the system.

If I thought the educational merits of the case were the important factor, I would say so, but they aren't. The power which the superintendent apparently does wield in the system, and his on-record lack of support for MIRP at the end of Year Two, suggest that at best next year the principal may have a near-complete MIRP school. On the other hand, a little loss in support for the innovation by the very teachers using it may have been in evidence at the nd of Year Two. A success against odds, by a skilled team made up of linking agent, school staff, and MIRP trainers. But the odds are precisely what limit the further implementation of the innovation in the system.

APPENDIX

BACKGROUND TO CASE STUDY DATA COLLECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Describing the basic strategy for carrying out this case study requires a brief review of the structure within which it is being carried out, the cooperative, colleaguial nature of the research effort, and conflicts between the case researcher and Linking Agency staff, especially the linking agent, over the differing priorities between service and research, especially the issue of confidentiality.

The first and most important fact is the extremely poor timing of the research effort. The researcher was not given a contract to study the three-year innovation process until November of its second year. Any description of events in Year one and in the first two months of Year Two of the innovation are thus historical reconstruction, through the potentially fallible means of linking agent contact reports and retrospective interviewing by this researcher.

The Linking Agency referred to above is a private, non-profit educational service organization specializing in three main areas: the development and implementation of innovative service programs in education including intervention in school systems by "trainers," "linking agents" or some other representative of the Linking Agency; contracts, usually with federal education bureaus such as the Office of Education and the National Institute of Education, to "diffuse" innovations -- new ideas in education -- from the inventors of the ideas to the potential users; and contracts to provide technical assistance to schools and other agencies. The Linking Agency's Consortium Project is carrying out and studying the diffusion of federally validated R&D based reading programs in twenty-six schools in six states across the country. The Consortium Project uses linking agents as the direct contacts between schools and R&D products and resources. This researcher is studying two of the four schools in Eastern State in which the Consortium Project is attempting to introduce innovations.

In Eastern State Ms. Lauren Hartwell is the Consortium Project's linking agent; she works directly with each of the four schools participating in the program. In the two schools I am studying in Eastern State, Ms. Hartwell worked in Year One to help the school administration and faculty identify needs in the area of reading, and select one reading program out of a pool of possibilities.

The case researcher is working as part of a three-person team; of the other two researchers, one is studying two schools in a rural plains midwestern state, and the other, two schools in a northern midwestern state. All three researchers work under the supervision of the Consortium Project's research director. The three researchers met with the research director at the beginning of the project's Year Two (1977-78) to get research ground rules set, and met again in early March 1978 to compare notes and progress up to that point.

The project allows the case researchers freedom to use whatever research approaches they wish. This includes sociological participant observation with the taking of field notes, as in such works as Hughes, Becker, Geer and Strauss, Boys in White, or Rosalie Wax, Doing Fieldwork. All available records; e.g., linking agent contact reports and demographic data gathered by the Linking Agency were made available to the researcher.

In the course of the research, a conflict arose on the subject of confidentiality. In her frequent site visits as the Consortium Project's linking agent, Ms. Hartwell had established relationships with school staff of such depth that in some cases she became privy to very personal information on the job behavior of some of her clients; she recorded some of this data in contact reports. The information became important to the researcher in helping to understand actions of key school staff members. The linking agent became uncomfortable about my dogging her footsteps and using her records, feeling that a kind of invasion of privacy, hers and her clients', was taking place. This is a classic conflict between the needs of research and the needs of service delivery.

The conflict was resolved by Ms. Hartwell agreeing that all her entries are to be considered research data (she may censor if she wishes), that the researcher has free access to the site and has his own sources of data, and that no site will see the research report until the linking agent is well out of it, never to return, so as not to put her in a difficult situation. Of course, all reports, including even this one, are coded. Ms. Hartwell is not the linking agent's real name and the name given given the site is a pseudonym. For more on this problem, see Stein, Vidich, and Bensman, Reflections on Community Studies.

Epilogue to Jefferson Elementary School Case Study

Introduction

This epilogue describes the events of the third and final year of the Consortium Project at the Jefferson Elementary School. Participants' descriptions of their activities and the results of their efforts provide the basis for this report. Consortium Project participants discussed the project in terms of its impact on student achievement and attitudes, on communication and attitude among staff and between home and school, and on the reputation of the Jefferson Elementary School.

Along with the story of Year Three events, this epilogue includes the participants' retrospective views of their experience in the Consortium Project. These perceptions recall many of the issues that were emphasized in the previous case study of this one Jefferson School. The impact of the teacher strike, the teachers' dedication, the linker's competence and commitment -- these continue to create a context for the unusual demands and rewards of the Model Intensive Reading Program, MIRP (a pseudonym) adoption.

The respondents interviewed for this epilogue were selected by the Jefferson Elementary School principal and the Consortium linking agent. By their own admission, these respondents were among the most satisfied participants at the Jefferson site. While they admit some flaws and shortcomings in the project, their story is most remarkable for its reports of wide-spread enthusiasm for the Consortium Project and for its spirit of proselytism. This epilogue will explore aspects of the model problem solving process, the MIRP program itself, the school and community context and the role of the linker.

Background

Motivations and objectives tend to shift in the course of the participants' involvement in a project. Respondents' perceptions at the end of Year Three of the Consortium Project are presented here as a point of comparison with the views reported in the previous case study.

Lauren Hartwell, the linking agent, was motivated to participate in the Consortium Project because of the opportunity to be both a process consultant and an organization development consultant. Her initial interest in the project was

based on a belief that curriculum adoptions could really "turn the school around." She now thinks that extensive organizational change is not possible through curriculum innovations, but believes that her interest in organizational development contributed to the success of the Consortium Project in Jefferson.

Sam Porter, the principal at Jefferson Elementary School, was eager to participate in the Consortium Project for several reasons: (1) he believed that language arts instruction could be improved, (2) he perceived that his school had a poor reputation in the community, and (3) the teacher morale needed a boost. The Jefferson School had been the scene of a renovation to "open-classroom" architecture some six years prior to the Consortium Project. This renovation was the result of a unilateral decision by the school board. Many members of the community still associated the lack of walls in the classrooms of Jefferson with a lack of discipline and with diminished learning. Jefferson students also come from families of somewhat lower socio-economic status than the community average, a fact which contributed to the school's reputation for producing less capable students. According to Porter, teacher morale was flagging at the Jefferson School because they had not been consulted or sufficiently trained about the open classroom innovation. The relatively poor reputation of the school in the community did not improve their spirits. When interviewed for this epilogue, Porter confirmed these original motivations and added that he had also sought a program which would help him specify standards and monitor performance in evaluating teachers.

Teachers, like the principal, wanted to implement a coordinated language arts program in which spelling, reading and writing instruction would be synchronized in a uniform format. They preferred that this program be consistent for all grades in order to facilitate management within and between classrooms. Although this objective was not emphasized earlier, teachers now report that they also wished to receive additional training in the teaching of reading.

The two parents who initially participated in the project's Decision Making Group (DMG) were motivated by the desire to improve their children's education. Both of these parents were wealthier than the Jefferson School norm and reported that they had been particularly concerned that their children not receive an inferior education.

The Process

All respondents described the problem solving process used for this adoption as unusual in the Jefferson school system and as valuable in building support for the MIRP implementation.

Similar innovations in the past, such as the decision to build open classrooms, had usually been made unilaterally by the Jefferson school board or some other administrative body. In contrast, this Consortium problem solving process included the participation of a multidisciplinary Decision Making Group (DMG) and followed the prescribed order of objectives and steps set forth by the Linking Agency.

Teachers who were members of the DMG participated in defining reading program selection criteria and in examining alternative programs. DMG members also consulted the rest of the faculty and elicited their participation in the curriculum selection process. Many respondents praised this wide-spread involvement in the planning of the project. Much of the success of this innovation was attributed to the fact that "the implementers were the choosers."

Most members of the DMG were able to describe this process in some detail. They recalled taking a long time to define the problem and to consider the advantages and drawbacks of MIRP. They were especially pleased by the opportunity to review a variety of program options and to observe several programs in operation. Members of every role group -- teachers, parents, administrators -- touted this involvement as being welcome and necessary to build sufficient enthusiasm to implement such a demanding program. One administrator remarked, "You have to have teacher and administrator support for the MIRP program because it is so involving. And teachers have to have their eyes open" (so they know what they are agreeing to before they commit themselves). "Examining other programs, spending time defining the problem added to their commitment."

The only complaints about the process, and these were mentioned rarely, were that more teachers should have been consulted earlier. According to one teacher, if the entire staff had been involved more fully in the activities of problem definition and product review prior to selection, there might have been even broader and stronger support for MIRP when it was selected.

During Years One and Two the DMG, with the linker's assistance, followed the prescribed problem solving objectives and time line. By the end of Year Two, the 17 teachers who had volunteered to participate in the innovation were using MIRP in their classrooms. An informal evaluation of teacher and student attitudes revealed general support for the program at the end of Year Two.

Sam Porter's original intention had been to require all teachers in his school to use MIRP during Year Three if it seemed relatively successful after its first year of implementation. A number of circumstances facilitated his achieving this goal. Because of declining enrollments at

the end of Year Two, the town was forced to close several small schools and reduce the teaching force. These changes permitted teachers to request transfers among schools and reportedly encouraged some teachers to volunteer for the MIRP program as a way of preserving their jobs. When Porter announced that every teacher in his building would use MIRP, only a few chose to transfer to other schools. According to the linker, their places were taken by teachers who wished to use MIRP or who were willing to try it because they wanted to work in Porter's school.

During the third year of the Consortium Project, the linker and the DMG adapted their activities to respond to the needs and capabilities of the site. They worked to solve implementation problems as they arose, designed a summative evaluation of the program, and participated in an active dissemination program outside the community.

Two basic implementation problems were encountered this year: (1) the need to train new teachers in the MIRP method and (2) the need to provide additional classroom assistance for all teachers. Training was mentioned as a critical issue by many respondents because the MIRP methods and materials are complex and exacting. Teachers who were new to MIRP in Year Three attended an initial training session for one week during the summer before school began. In addition, two Jefferson teachers attended an advanced training session after their first year's experience teaching MIRP. They then provided a training workshop for their colleagues who were beginning their second year of MIRP teaching. New teachers received additional assistance from the experienced teachers, who loaned them materials and advised them about methods. This colleague support was provided easily and informally because of the open classroom facilities in which several teachers conduct classes within the same large space. Despite these provisions for formal training, some teachers had difficulty implementing MIRP at the beginning of this year (1978-79). The DMG attempted to identify teachers who were encountering difficulty and then to provide them with materials or other assistance which they required. According to the linker, the informal support networks among teachers and the more systematic assistance of the DMG were sufficient to resolve most implementation problems early in Year Three.

The parents on the DMG also attempted to address the teachers' need for more assistance in the classroom during MIRP instruction period. They recruited parent volunteers in record numbers (few if any volunteers worked in the school during Year One, few last year, and some twenty-five this year) to assist teachers with the MIRP program. Parents helped make materials and served as aides in the classroom during activities such as testing which require more adult supervision than one teacher can provide.

The teachers interviewed are the only elementary teachers in the school (grades 7 - 8 are considered intermediate as of this year and are no longer included in the elementary school). As such they are the only logical users, and in fact the only users, of the program in the district. Because their training was not well synchronized with the actual beginning of instruction, they feel that implementation of the program did not follow an orderly sequence. Instead they used trial and error, "hunt and peck," to implement the new methods and to use the new materials.

This perception about implementation may be accurate and may reflect the revisions in the model decision making process which were required because of delays in the arrival of materials. However, the perception is also consistent with some of the community tendencies described in the Environmental Context section. In this community, home-grown solutions and team work among insiders tend to be more highly valued than assistance from outsiders.

The steps of evaluation, generalization and institutionalization of the new program have been given scant attention. In giving informal evaluations of the program, the staff speak of improved morale among students and teachers. Teachers also express the hope that achievement tests given to students next fall will show improved reading scores. As yet, however, there is no objective evaluation data of any sort.

In reviewing the impact of the model problem solving process, several points are worth noting. First, the process did coincide with the adoption of a new reading curriculum but the linkages between steps in the process are not clear. The original problem statement focused on the isolation of the Hastings community, the need for an enriched reading program, and McHenry's desire for staff development. The criteria generated to assist in selecting a program were the need to supplement rather than replace the current reading program, to select a program which could be used by every student, and to improve classroom management. In fact, the DID program was chosen because it permitted individualization of instruction and it included interesting new equipment like that used in the innovative math program. Thus the logical, progressive process envisioned by the problem solving model does not appear to have occurred in reality.

A second interesting point about the process is that participants thought it was, in many respects, fun, valuable and necessary for the successful implementation of the new program. They enjoyed working together and, particularly the teachers, appreciated being given attention and responsibility. They were pleased to develop contacts with colleagues outside their community.

The summative evalution conducted by the DMG included interviews of students and teachers eliciting their reactions to MIRP and the collection of student work to assess language arts skills. In addition, the language arts coordinator has attempted to analyze standardized test scores so as to assess the effects of MIRP. However, at the time of the interviews for this epilogue, no systematic use of evaluation data had been made by the Jefferson staff.

The faculty members of the DMG seemed most enthusiastic about the dissemination activities in which they have participated this year. The linker suggested these activities because the DMG had completed the prescribed problem solving process but were still eager to meet and work together as a group. "Dissemination is a valuable vehicle for institutionalization," the linking agent said during the interview. The faculty members have attended a variety of conferences around the state where they have made presentations about their experiences with the Consortium Project. Teachers described their motivation to participate in such proselytizing as stemming in part from the satisfaction of sharing information about a reading program and a problem solving process which they perceive as successful. One administrator also said, "The dissemination is done partly to get the central administration to recognize that we do have a valid program." The teachers appeared to feel proud of their position as experts and of their competence as public speakers.

The two parents on the DMG, in contrast to the faculty members, were not feeling especially important or interested in their role duing Year Three. They both enjoyed being helpful in presenting their points of view during Years One and Two, and in publicizing the program in the community and in generating parent support. As the function of the DMG evolved into training and disseminating outside the community, the parents felt less competent to contribute. One had participated in DMG meetings only minimally this year and the other announced her plans to retire from the group at the end of this year.

The Jefferson linker felt the model problem solving process was appropriate and useful in Jefferson. She encountered only minimal resistance in the early stages of the project and this stemmed primarily from the principal who expressed his ambivalence by not attending some meetings she had scheduled at the school. She asked him directly about his absences and convinced him that she was there to help, not to criticize him. Thereafter, they were able to discuss their differences and collaborate smoothly.

Teachers could not cite instances in which they had applied the model problem solving process to other situations. How-

ever, the principal reported using the approach to address some other problems which had been identified in the school. Although the process had not been so elaborate, he had used multidisciplinary teams and encouraged them to follow a logical sequence of steps in their efforts. In his view, they were successful.

The Product

MIRP is an unusually specific and detailed program of instruction, which employs behavior modification strategies to teach basic academic skills. Teachers are given training, a rigid script to use for classroom instructions, and explicit directions about preparing the extensive instructional materials such as charts and flash cards. Children are tested regularly and grouped by skill level across as well as within classrooms. A MIRP classroom has a distinctive appearance and sound during the program's operation. The students may be divided into as many as three groups, one group drilling with the teacher, another reading independently from the encyclopedia, and a third completing worksheets at their desks. The drilling group is loud as the teacher calls out memorized instructions and questions and the students respond in unison according to a memorized format. The MIRP lesson observed was clipped, rhythmic, and rapid in the manner of an army drill. Teachers report that implementing this program requires a great deal of energy and enthusiasm. In addition to the instruction itself, teachers must prepare large quantities of materials requiring in the first year some four or five hours each night. Students must learn the skills for participating in the several phases of MIRP, including the ability to work independently or with minimal supervision from a teacher fully occupied with a skill group.

Teachers implemented MIRP "by the book" during the first year. The trainers who provided the supplementary training during the second implementation year (Year Three, 1978-79) "were more lenient," according to one teacher. "We were relieved to know there were some short cuts because the first year was an awful lot of work." Most teachers described themselves as still very doctrinaire in their approach, but less anxious now when making what they believe are necessary revisions in the MIRP method. These revisions include limiting or omitting some components of MIRP instruction which can not be scheduled given the other instructional obligations. For instance, some teachers have fewer individual conferences with students than the method requires and others are not able to give mastery tests as often as MIRP calls for.

Teachers reportedly vary in their fidelity to MIRP methods. The parents and the linker suggested that more experienced teachers are generally more faithful to the letter and spirit of MIRP laws. Amount of training is also seen as a factor

in the teachers' conformity to MIRP. One mother who had participated in the MIRP selection process and had volunteered extensively in the school complained that her two children's teachers were not skilled in teaching MIRP. She attributed their lack of skill to what she believed was inadequate training received by teachers who began using MIRP this year. According to this parent, one of these teachers, who had been hired in the middle of the year, had only observed a MIRP classroom for a few days before she was expected to become a MIRP teacher.

Extension of the MIRP program beyond its intended use in the Jefferson Elementary School has been fairly limited. A few teachers have successfully applied MIRP teaching techniques, such as repetition and immediate positive reinforcement, to mathematics instruction. The district language arts coordinator reported that she had trained some junior high school teachers to incorporate more of these strategies into their teaching vocabulary and spelling to high school students.

Aside from these extensions of MIRP, the program has not been adopted by other schools in the district. The language arts coordinator said that the limited extension is a result of her recognition that the program requires enormous teacher commitment and administrative support in order to be taught well. She believes it is an excellent program but that the commitment necessary for its successful implementation could not be generated until the adoption process included the multidisciplinary participation and the lengthy discussions of the Jefferson adoption.

The Role of the Linking Agent

The linker, Lauren Hartwell, remained in contact with the Jefferson School throughout the three years of the Consortium Project and was extremely well regarded by all respondents. She looked forward to her involvement in the Consortium Project because she saw it as an opportunity for organizational intervention. "I thought that adopting a reading program would put me in a position to make the whole school better." As the project evolved she was able to do "some organizational development consulting, but not that much. I think the linker should intervene in the organization beyond the DMG, e.g. the way the program fits into the school." She implied that both the constraints on her prescribed role and the objectives of the site personnel prevented her from attending more to organizational development.

During the first year (1976-77) she had a central role as a process consultant who led the Decision Making Group through the stages of problem identification, program analysis, observation and selection. Respondents were full of praise for her ability to surface and explore conflicts, to summarize content, and to help the group adhere successfully to

a prearranged agenda. "She wouldn't let us go too fast, bless her, wouldn't let us see the programs until we had hammered out a problem statement," said one DMG member. "Each person had their own ideas, which she kept clear, but moved us toward the goal steadily."

All respondents saw the linking agent role as crucial, particularly in the first year of the project. She brought "visions of potential," monetary assistance, problem solving and group leadership skills. She provided access to information about and observation of a wide variety of reading programs. With her access to research data she was able to persuade a reluctant shool board to support the program. Her role this year has included keeping interest in the program strong by instigating and orchestrating new mechanisms of involvement for faculty.

This linking agent's personal qualities were also praised. The principal said, "I don't think anybody much different from Lauren could be helpful." She built trust through careful maintenance of confidentiality with staff; she conveyed genuine concern for the staff and parents.

Ms. Hartwell believes the role of an outside linker was essential to the success of this project. She described these advantages as an outsider: (1) not being involved in personal politics, she could more easily keep people "on track," (2) she could identify and clarify issues which insiders did not recognize or assumed that everyone understood, (3) she absorbed "flak" and made meetings safer. Ms. Hartwell mentioned two other aspects of her involvement in Jefferson which she believed increased her effectiveness. Before the Consortium Project began, she had trained two Jefferson teachers in another project and their respect for her facilitated building a relationship with the staff. She also had the courage to confront the principal early in the project when they developed some disagreements about one another's responsibilities. The principal had begun to absent himself from DMG activities and at Lauren's initiative they discovered that he was uncertain about how much power she intended to wield in the building. A direct confrontation settled their misunderstanding and prompted a close, mutually respectful collaboration.

The School Context

The Jefferson School's reputation in the community suffered from the school's "open" architecture and the fact that its students were of a lower socio-economic level than the community mean. At the time the Consortium Project began, many teachers felt they were working in a school nobody cared about. The principal said that if he had invited all the

staff to a lobster feast in the first year he was principal (just after the open classroom renovations) two lobsters would have been too many for the teachers who would have shown up.

The principal was described fondly by parents and teachers as paternalistic. He is an energetic, talkative man who obviously cares very much about establishing an open, warm community in his school. He regularly eats lunch in the cafeteria and sits with students so he can chat with them. Parents have always been invited to visit the school and the classrooms at any time, unannounced, if they just check in at the principal's office before going to the classrooms. Several teachers mentioned that he discourages the "prima donna" syndrome, which they had seen in other schools, by carefully treating all teachers equally rather than "playing favorites." His conversation is peppered with references which underscore that his primary values are hard work and cooperation with one's fellows.

By his own and his teachers' report, this principal at least appears to be more democratic than the average. He has been told by one former superintendent that he wasted time by trying to involve too many people in decisions. Yet one teacher said, with a tolerant smile, that the principal likes to give people the opportunity to choose what he wanted them to do in the first place. Porter said he wanted a MIRP-like program when this program began and was pleased by the participatory decision making process but would have pushed for MIRP if the staff had leaned another way.

There is an active parent-teacher organization in the Jefferson School which arranges annual fund raising events to pay for equipment or programs that the school board will not fund; however, only a small portion of parents take active part in school activities. One parent said that parents and the principal agree that the parent organization should advise, but should not try to dictate to the principal.

At this time the school exudes an unusual sense of coherent identity and good will. The unity appears to stem in part from the collaborative atmosphere established by the principal. The legacy of the teacher strike is also mentioned as a major factor in staff relations. Most teachers supported the strike and forged a strong bond as colleagues in adverse circumstances. Finally, participation in selecting and implementing a demanding and unusual program, MIRP, appears to have increased teachers' sense of shared purpose. The principal summarized by saying that if now he tried to give a lobster feast for the staff, he would go bankrupt.

The Environmental Context

The overwhelmingly influential event in school-community relations during the past three years was the long, bitter teacher strike in the fall of Year Two (1977-78). Teachers struck over budget cuts which reflected the community's economic decline and perhaps the generally declining reputation of public schools. The strike heightened teachers' feelings that the community did not support them, that parents did not sufficiently encourage school objectives, and that there was little appreciation of teachers' efforts. It caused deep divisions between the community and school staff, between central administration and the principals, between strikers and strike breakers. Several respondents got tears in their eyes as they described this painful experience and all agreed with the principal that "it stripped away all the school veneer and left a lot of hurt feelings." The Jefferson School emerged from the strike more cohesive than most partly because the principal supported his teachers and because few teachers were strike breakers.

Implementation of the MIRP program, which began immediately after the strike, took advantage of, or perhaps coalesced, the teachers' pent up desire to work hard and teach well when the strike ended. Because it demanded so much effort, teachers forged a camaraderie in collaborating to put the program into effect. "Ironically, there was a real sense of togetherness in working on MIRP but now it's become so automatic," said one teacher. During the second year of implementation (Year Three) the level of effort was not so intense and the sense of identity as MIRP teachers also diminished, but it remains an important component in teachers' sense of unity. "It's given us a unified way of teaching the same things the same way. Every teacher knows what was done the year before."

Support from the central administration and the superintendent for MIRP adoption at the Jefferson School has been passive at best. The linker and the administrators observed that the school board has been loath to spend money for any new program and that the superintendent has had some reservations about the Jefferson reading program being different from the one used everywhere else in the system. The school board refused to budget funds to provide further MIRP training for Jefferson teachers. One district supervisor said that the one thing that would save the MIRP program with the school board was that it was a "back to basics" approach.

Outcomes

Students observed in a MIRP classroom appeared to be enthusiastic and skillful in participating in the program, including working independently without much adult supervision. Most

students spoken with said they enjoyed MIRP but a few older ones complained that the repetition and regimentation was becoming boring in their second year.

All teachers and parents reported that they believe students are learning more than they did before MIRP -- learning to spell more words, improving their handwriting and composition skills, increasing their reading comprehension and enjoyment. They also feel that the students' study skills have improved; they take more responsibility for their own learning and are able to proof and correct their own work.

Teachers reported feeling more skillful and better organized in using the MIRP program. They are clearer about objectives, lesson plans and results. Generally the most enthusiastic teachers were those who believed that the MIRP methods were similar to the teaching style which they had always preferred. Most teachers (and both parents) declared that teaching MIRP is exhausting and at times boring. The parents believed strongly that volunteers or paid aides are a necessary support for teachers.

Teachers also reported a shift in communication patterns within the building which they attribute to the adoption of MIRP. They increasingly turn to other teachers for assistance in materials or strategies. Teachers who are more experienced with MIRP have become trainers or mentors for other teachers who are less familiar with the program. Several people reported a significant division between those who teach MIRP and those who do not, such as the principal and the reading specialist. Teachers said they would be less likely now to ask the principal for help in teaching a student. The reading specialist thought she was somewhat isolated from teachers because she did not teach MIRP. She believed that all teachers are now "mini-reading specialists" and that her role had shifted substantially since MIRP. She continued to tutor some slow students, but much more of her time was spent organizing enrichment programs for both the average and the bright students. The resource room teacher also thought that the regular education teachers were able to respond to a wider range of skills in their students. Consequently her roster diminished and she was able to work more effectively with few students.

The relationship between parents and the school has altered to some extent as a result of the MIRP adoption. The problem solving process which included parent representatives on the DMG and more involvement of parents in general is seen to have had a lasting effect on the parental support of the program. After the open classroom renovation, parents were leary of yet another experiment at the beginning of the Consortium Project. The parents on the DMG believed that

parents now appreciate MIRP partly because they were informed about it before it was adopted. Parents are said to appreciate the mastery tests and other MIRP materials, which students bring home, as evidence that their children are learning. One mother was delighted that her daughter insisted on bringing MIRP work with her on the family vacation so that she would not lose ground to her fellow students while she was away from school. During this year many more parents have been volunteering, but other parent support is fairly tacit. As one DMG parent put it, "Now many parents have gone back to not paying attention to school."

The MIRP program appeared to be reponsible, at least in part, for a general improvement in the school's reputation in the community. Parents of students in other schools have noticed the quantity of work which Jefferson students are expected to complete and are favorably impressed. The language arts coordinator noticed that junior high teachers, who used to complain that Jefferson students were poorly prepared, have now commented that incoming students from Jefferson have above average skills in such areas as spelling and handwriting.

More objective data about the results of the MIRP program are in short supply. Achievement test results were lost during Year Two (the principal is vague about how this happened) and are not readily comparable with Year Three data because a different level of the test was administered. The district language arts coordinator organized one study in which Jefferson students were matched with other students in their district and their reading and spelling scores were compared. In previous years, Jefferson students scored below the community mean on these tests, but this study showed that in 1977-78, Jefferson School students scored at about the same level or a bit higher than the other students. The linker collected various types of data for evaluating the program but her results were not available when this report was written.

This innovation experiment began at a time when the principal had been trying to build a sense of community in his school to combat widespread low morale. He wanted to increase student performance in a visible way, to increase parental and community support for the school, and to increase teacher confidence, competence, and sense of commitment. The MIRP program and the problem solving process appeared to have furthered these goals. At the end of Year Three, most teachers supported the program enthusiastically and some felt an extraordinary commitment to help the program survive. The principal was also extremely pleased with the apparent results of the MIRP program. He anticipated that improved test scores would testify to the program's success and he said he would modify or reject MIRP if achievement scores did not improve.

Participants raised several concerns which may affect the extent and longevity of this innovation. They noted that both teachers and students had to work very hard to implement MIRP. They worried that students might become bored and that teachers, particularly after the linker's support is withdrawn, might become lax or less enthusiastic. Because training was viewed as a prerequisite to successful MIRP teaching, the absence of a training budget was also seen as potentially problematic for the continued success of the MIRP adoption.

APPENDIX

Data sources

Data for this study were drawn primarily from interviews with participants in the Consortium Project. These interviews took place in May, 1979, and with the exception of the linker, all respondents were interviewed at the Jefferson School. The principal was proud of the program and eager and efficient in arranging interview schedules at my convenience. All interviews were tape recorded except for the linker's interview, during which I wrote extensive notes.

The original case study about the Jefferson School and the linker's progress reports provided background information in addition to the interviews. However, all the findings and descriptions in this epilogue are based on data from my interviews.

Respondents

principal
linking agent
2 parents -- members of Decision Making Group
4 classroom teachers -- including 3 members of Decision Making Group
2 special educators -- members of Decision Making Group
1 district language arts coordinator -- also a member of the Decision Making Group

BRIDGETOWN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Case Study of Bridgetown Elementary School

I. THE SOCIAL CONTEXT OF THE SCHOOL

The social context of the Bridgetown Elementary School is of critical importance in understanding what was, and was not, possible in the Bridgetown School itself. The school is located in a community with a long history, which can be divided into two subjects: the historical background of this community's development and the educational climate of the district itself.

Historical Background

The historical background of Bridgetown can be divided into three periods: the pre-fire era, the Great Bridgetown Fire of 1966, and the post-fire or welfare community era. In the first and longest period, Bridgetown grew as a colonial port city across the bay from a well-known East Coast colonial city. While always economically and socially in the shadow of its neighbor across the bay, Bridgetown grew gradually, during the era of Irish immigration from 1850 to 1880, as a small manufacturing and sea-crafts community of working class individuals and strong local ethnic institutions, especially the Catholic churches divided on parish lines. Politics was traditionally of the Irish-Catholic parish-plus-patronage variety, with local ties and local relationships of critical importance. A second and critically important wave of immigration began in about 1870 and enlarged to a flood by 1880 or 1890, continuing for several decades afterwards. This was the wave (waves, actually) of Jewish immigrants, in early years from Germany but in the later era -- 1880-1910 -- from Southeastern Europe, especially Russia and Southern Poland. This Jewish ethnic community put down strong roots of its own. By the mid-twenties Bridgetown was the strong-hold of a pro-education, pro-upward mobility, pro-school Jewish working and lower middle class, with strong community institutions.

The Great Depression hit Bridgetown hard, and while not as hard as it hit communities with only one major industry, by the time World War II was over, the sons and daughters of the stable working class had begun to leave their parents' neighborhoods for the suburbs, up the hill from the seaside basin area of Bridgetown. The older generation with their brogues or Jewish accents remained behind. Two major events occurred, the first gradual, the second a kind ofcoup-de-grace for the area.

First, the aging white population of left-behind, predominantly ethnic Irish and Jewish people was replaced by a black and Spanish-speaking population, often in extreme poverty and on welfare. The crime rate rose as the social organization and unity of the community declined. Two accounts illustrate this. The first came from a white woman who was a teller at a bank on the main street of Bridgetown. I had noticed some run-down wood buildings with a good view of the great bridge that spans Bridgetown harbor. Would it be wise to buy one and fix it up? She replied:

> You wouldn't want to live here. I grew up here, and I did live here for thirty years. I don't now. I live in Whiteville. It's going downhill fast. Soon it will be an all-welfare city. The bars around here now have prostitutes in front of them. Blacks are moving in from the slums across the bridge, in Eastern City.

The second report is from the assistant principal of the Bridgetown School in charge of Grades 4-6; he is himself of Jewish background and grew up in Bridgetown, and prefaced this tale with the admonition that what he said might sound racist, but that he isn't:

> Bridgetown was once a community. The Jewish ethnic group was the heart of the community. It's moved away now. When it was there, in the school I was in as a teacher, we had 700 paid-up families in the PTA. They made <u>sure</u> things got done. We had more equipment than many fancy systems. They're gone now. I have too, I live in Suburbia. But I miss the old community. I even go back to the old Deli once in a while and the old Temple; it's <u>warmer</u> there. But the core of the community is gone, to the country, to the suburbs, away. It's a welfare city now. The Puerto Ricans are <u>not</u> organized and they don't have a loyalty. Whenever they want, they go back to Puerto Rico.

The man then told a tale about the star junior high basketball player who left to visit his grandmother in Puerto Rico the night before the big game that might have given the school the championship.

The second big event in Bridgetown's history was a summer fire about ten years ago, when a high wind whipped up flames and burned almost a quarter of the city, including the main remaining middle-class part of the city and most of the remaining small manufacturing plants. This effectively wiped out most of the remaining middle class homes and much of the remaining local employment.

The implications of these changes for education are extremely important. First, the political offices of the town are still in the old ethnic hands, not in the hands of the new majority (who are not organized enough politically to seize them at this point). This includes the school system.

But too many negative conclusions need not be drawn about this state of affairs. First, there are many federally funded support programs (Title I, Medicaid) and the whole spectrum of public and private agencies for serving the poor. Second, in this researcher's view, the school administration is relatively progressive, compared to schools in other low income areas, though there are some problems to be discussed below. Third, through a geographical accident, the Bridgetown Elementary School being studied has inherited, as a constituency, the remaining middle-class families in Bridgetown, whose own school was burned down in the great fire of ten years ago. I observed that the school being studied seems well-run and well-equipped. The assistant principal interviewed above stated:

> The only ones who care about this school are what's left of the parents of the neighboring school area who stayed, and are pushing for a good school here and supporting us when we buy stuff. They're the only ones who go to our PTA meetings at the school.

This begins to present the flavor: a gulf between the old guard who no longer live in Bridgetown but attempt to administer benevolently the community's public institutions, including the schools, for the new minority, which is nevertheless looked down upon and thought to be incompetent. A sense of decline pervades the air, but some life is left, including the school we studied.

The Educational Climate of the District

Three factors help in characterizing the relationships between the context of the school and the school itself. These are: bureaucratic politics and the civil service mentality; cutbacks as a result of population decline; and Puerto Rican alienation from the school system. This brief discussion of the community context can be concluded with a consideration of whether the school is typical or atypical for Bridgetown, its host community.

What can be called bureaucratic politics, and the related issue of the civil service mentality, relates to the historical background just sketched out. One view of the Bridgetown public bureaucracies is that of a lot of old-time civil service employees who have held onto their

jobs through the years as the community has changed around them. A young and hard-working, or "dynamic," mayor has tried to turn around the community and the bureaucracy, but major movement is yet to be observed here. In the field of education, the assistant superintendent of the school system has been a friend of the curricular improvement program being studied from its beginning, but there is definitely a feeling tone in the Bridgetown school I studied and in a significant proportion of the teachers and special staff that one "puts in the time," that education is just a job. Some teachers that eventually became involved with the reading program adopted, Model Intensive Reading Program, MIRP (a pseudonym), shared the typical bureaucratic attitudes which may have led to their complaints about the time demands which this program (a very demanding one) made on them.

Staff cutbacks as a result of student population decline have had an effect on the Bridgetown school system. In common with many other systems, and even in the face of an in-migrating welfare population, the population of Bridgetown has been shrinking. As a consequence, teachers are often only hired provisionally. Also, toward the end of the project's second year, some teachers participating in the MIRP adoption were told they would be let go or reassigned due to cutbacks that were quite beyond the control of the school principal and assistant principals. More important, a cutback situation has a way of adding to tension, or at the very least an unwillingness to risk.

Puerto Rican alienation from the school system is a third characteristic affecting the educational process. The great majority of the Spanish-speaking community in Bridgetown are Puerto Rican, and maintain close ties to the home island. Although this may change in the future, the minorities aren't well organized politically. They do not seem to constitute an effective pressure group in the schools. On the other hand, their needs are considered at least officially in the Bridgetown School through several programs for language skills. Some extra government program money has been sought and received in these areas. However, it appears to be sought in the spirit of "responsibility" and "noblesse oblige." No evidence, for example, was obtained of significant Spanish-speaking community involvement in either the planning or the carrying out of the adoption of the new reading program.

In summing up, one has to ask whether the school is typical or atypical for Bridgetown. My conclusions would be as follows. The social history of the community affected all the schools within it, but possibly this school a little less because of the residue of middle-class, school-supporting parents attached to it. In addition, (this will be discussed further below) the Bridgetown

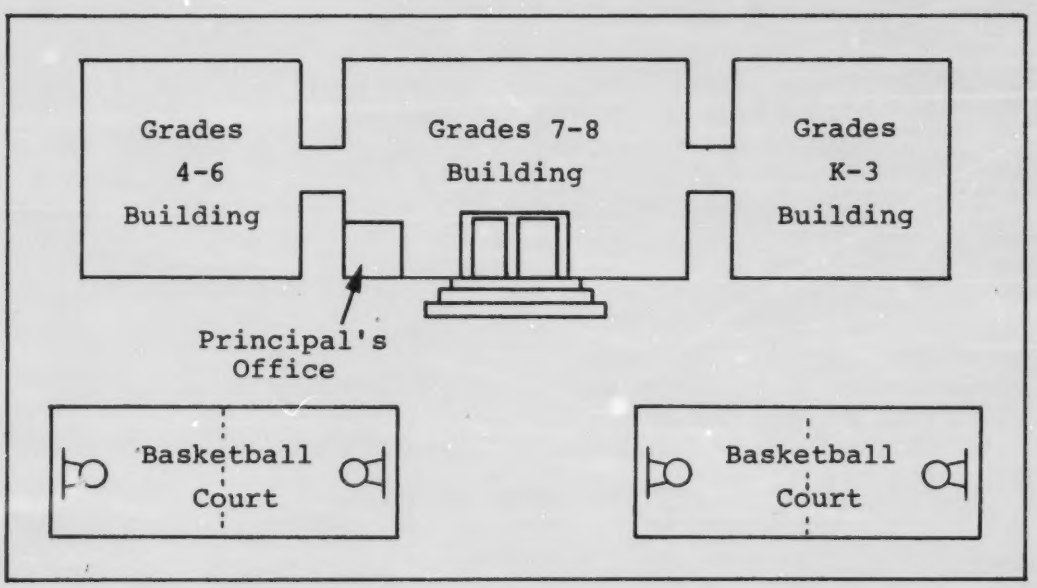
School houses not only the sole junior high in town but also an elementary school. As such, it has a centralness and importance the other smaller schools do not have. Third, though not alone in the district in this respect, it has a history of active interest in innovation and had a previous relationship, through an earlier innovation project (an early childhood screening program), with the linking agency in the present project. It appears, in conclusion, that the school is strongly affected by its context, but is at present attempting to work "against the grain" to improve services.

II. THE SCHOOL

The Bridgetown Elementary School, the site of the research, is characterized by one very unique attribute: it is not simply an elementary school, but is in fact a combination elementary school (K-6) and junior high school (7-8) with a combined enrollment of 1400 students, making it the largest school in Bridgetown. The school can be discussed under the following headings: building, organizational structure, students, teachers, and climate.

Building: The Sociology of Architecture in a Large School

The shape of the Bridgetown school building makes it look like the classic large school in the urban poverty area. The asphalt basketball courts in the front and side school yards and the school's location directly facing the approach overpass to the giant bridge over the bay to Eastern City completes the environment.

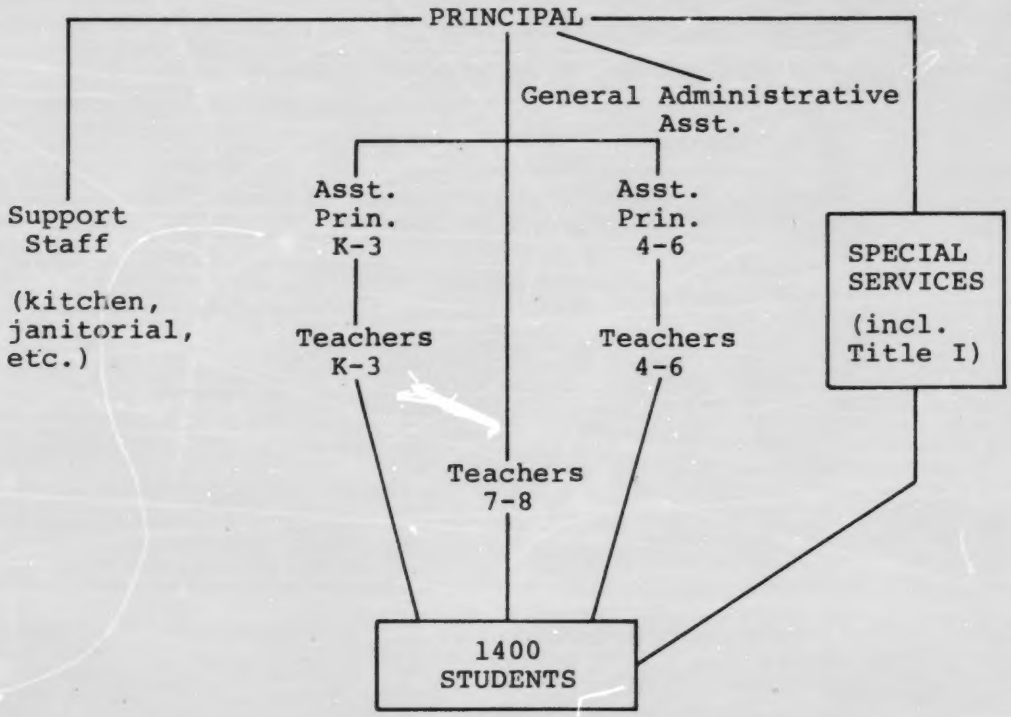


This above depicted architectural arrangement has several obvious sociological consequences. In the first place, only in a very abstract sense can we talk about a "Bridgetown Elementary School." In fact, there are two elementary schools, each in its own wing of the building: a K-3 wing and a 4-6 wing, each with its own social climate and its own assistant principal. The principal's office is in the central building, but he is the principal of the whole arrangement (two elementary wings plus middle grades) and he also has an administrative assistant. Add a large Title I program and other support staffs, 1300-1400 children (about half on welfare), a continuous parade of school workers, social workers, court officers, etc., in and out of these walls and one begins to get an idea both of the size of the school and the complexity of social relationships.

The principal of the Bridgetown School observes that the arrangement of having this many grades under one roof has positive as well as negative consequences. He observes that children can meet their older (and younger) brothers and sisters in the hallways, can feel a "family" atmosphere.

Organizational Structure

Bridgetown School's organizational structure is relatively complex. A simplified version would be as follows:



Note that the special services staff (including the Title I program) are in effect in their own domain, a semi-autonomous entity made more so by the splitting up of the elementary school into two halves. In operation, this structure in this size of school can easily be seen to lead to confusion. Who, for example, is the real line supervisor? In the case of grades K-3 and 4-6, it is clearly the assistant principals. However, if as the assistant principals and the linking agent report, the principal both makes a lot of the decisions and also changes them rapidly, problems both of communication and decision making can be expected to be common, as they would naturally be in any human services organization of this size, for example, in a mental hospital or a small college.

Intra-school organization, especially relations between the principal and the superintendent's office, were only occasionally problematic during the course of the project, for one important reason: the assistant superintendent of the Bridgetown school system was, from the beginning year of the program (1976-77) and during the first year of implementation (1977-78), a strong supporter of the program who pushed for gaining additional money from the Bridgetown school committee to continue local support for the MIRP program during next year (academic 1978-1979).

Students

Bridgetown Elementary School students are about equally split between welfare families and working class families, with a small subgroup (perhaps 10%) of children coming from the "middle-middle" class. The principal reported that on the average, reading scores are a little better here than in some of the other elementary schools in the system. Many teachers do seem to have a personal commitment to the children, at least to the extent of my observations of classroom interaction. While about a third of the students are of Spanish-speaking background, the assistant principal estimates that only 10% actually speak Spanish at home. In general, these are children from poor homes, in a school that, in the words of the principal, "wants to help these hours be the brightest ones in their lives."

Teachers

Ten teachers were the mainstay of the adoption of the MIRP program in Bridgetown Elementary School during the observation year: 5 in each wing. In general, it should be noted that the Bridgetown teachers participating in the MIRP adoption were a <u>minority</u> within each wing (5 out of 18 teachers in one wing and 5 out of 20 in the other). This is important because their individual commitment to the

extra work involved in the new program was watched from the sidelines by the majority. This led the participating teachers into feeling rather different from those in the other school I observed, where the majority of all teachers were involved in the MIRP adoption, with the minority left out.

It is possible to distinguish betwen the teachers in each of the two wings in terms of esprit-de-corps and commitment to the new program. The K-3 wing teachers, working as a close-knit social unit with their assistant principal, seemed actively interested in the project throughout the year. For a variety of reasons, including career change plans, personal life changes, and temporary job status, the grades 4-6 wing teachers using the new program did not appear to have the same level of commitment, though their assistant principal clearly did care about the program and worked on its behalf in encouraging his teachers.

Climate of the School

In a word, warm. And, once over the shock of the asphalt front yard, one began to notice the lack of broken windows, the cleanliness, the informality, complete absence of police, and so on. This was not the blackboard jungle, it was a school run by an administration that seemed to like the kids.

On the other hand, it was clear that discipline was viewed as a problem, especially when large numbers of children were brought together. One example will show the way it was usually handled. The event was the Christmas assembly. A student band had produced a performance whose key number was "Rock and Roll Bach." At the start of the assembly, the teachers stood on the sides of the aisles, completely surrounding the children. They had their arms folded in front of them and a somewhat stern expression on their faces. But after a few minutes they relaxed, the kids relaxed and enjoyed the show. Apparently, the strategy is to impose firm but warm controls, then relax, and be "on the side" of the kids. In classrooms, the same approach seemed to be used. Incidentally, the innovation (MIRP) was said by one assistant principal to be helpful to the discipline issue.

III. CONSORTIUM PROCESS

The Entry Phase

Bridgetown Elementary School's involvement with the Consortium program and linking agent Hartwell began with

the 1976-77 school year and was designed to continue for thirty months. The first year of the project was to be devoted to identifying problems in the area of reading and to selecting an R&D-based program that could meet identified needs. The second year of the project was to be devoted to the implementation of the selected program.

The Bridgetown school system had previous relationships with the linking agency through its Eastern State Diffusion Assistance Project which assisted schools in the state to learn of and adopt innovative programs. Because of this experience, the assistant superintendent was in favor of innovative programs and enough teachers were committed to change to make possible a warm initial reception to the Consortium Project. On September 3, 1976, the linking agent sums up her contact report by recording this:

> This meeting was very exciting to me. The people are enthusiastic, they are intelligent, they are sensitive to the issues and everything that was said made me look forward more and more to working with the school and these people. They believe that reading is a need in the school and that this program will be a good way for them to help meet that need. At a couple of points different people said, "I am enthusiastic about this program" for this reason. At one point the principal said, "This is really a neat program. I think there are a lot of zippy things to this program." This attitude is prevalent throughout the meeting from everyone there. The issues that they raised themselves were issues that I would have needed to raise if they were not so skilled, for example: the criteria for people to belong to the decision making group, the fact of gathering support for the program in different parts of the school community. I was also impressed that the principal was careful at the end of the meeting to say to me, "What are our next steps?" and to begin outlining them.
>
> All in all, I am looking forward to working with these people and believe this will be very successful in the Bridgetown School.

Problem Identification: Progress and Pitfalls

The phase of identifying problems went slower than the linking agent anticipated. The initial open reaction and support soon ran afoul of a busy, complex school schedule, a school with many special programs (e.g., Title I, bilingual education) all demanding the teachers' time. By December the linking agent writes:

> People were draggy at this meeting and there was a lot

of off-task discussion. The (4-6 principal) was the only administrator there and he was responsible for most of this. I am concerned that momentum has been lost. Part of the reason for this is the limited meeting time we've had. Each meeting lasts a little more than an hour and there was almost a month between meetings. I want to meet with (K-3 assistant principal) to see about having more meeting time. Time of year may also be a problem just now.

At an all day meeting in January, 1977, the "Curriculum Analyzer" and other problem identification and decision making tools were used by the Decision Making Group (DMG). Although they originally were intending to use the Reading Improvement Program as the innovation, there was a change. Between February and March of Year One, the group, with the input of the linking agent evolved toward choosing MIRP. By March 25, 1977 of Year One, the linking agent and the assistant principals knew that MIRP would be the program as all the DMG wanted it, but also knew that training would not begin until late August. Also, by early spring enmity was building between the K-3 assistant principal (also a union organizer in the school) and the principal, concerning support for field visits to see MIRP in action. This enmity would characterize their relationship for the rest of the program, but would not, apparently, affect the carrying out of the innovation in the K-3 area.

Another problem began to arise. The special services staff, especially from the Title I program, began to view adoption of MIRP as a potential threat. Also, parents stopped coming to meetings and the Decision Making Group made little effort to bring them back in -- "they wouldn't come anyway." In reference to the issue of parents volunteering time in the school to work on reading programs, the linking agent wrote (21 January 1977), "The group was unanimously agreed that it would be very difficult to get parents actively involved in any program at the school as volunteers or with any kind of responsibilities. . . Community involvement was defined by this group for this school to mean exclusively communicating to parents what the school and program were about." This is simply one instance of the gap between school and community.

Apparently the critical incident in choosing MIRP was the observing of the program in action. It simply surprised them, especially the enthusiasm of the children in the school they visited. It looked better to them in reality than it did on paper. By May, 1977, the final decision had been made to adopt Model Intensive Reading Program (MIRP).

The Innovation: MIRP Observed

MIRP is a reading improvement program which, if the full approach is adopted, is at the same time a prescription for the way reading, spelling, creative writing, punctuation, and handwriting are routinely taught from day to day. It demands a clear break in teacher behavior (they start acting like programmed teaching machines) teaching strategy, and the nature of the response expected from children. The aim is group reinforcement through group oral repetition, en masse, of words, phrases, and other teaching materials, plus creative writing to test word and subject comprehension, plus timed mastery tests, plus a non-punitive approach, plus push-push-push.

The teaching of the reading, spelling, writing, and so on are all integrated, but the program is teacher labor-intensive rather than technology-intensive, with teachers kept busy evenings and weekends, in their first year of the program, making their own flashcards, word lists, and other material, plus, of course, grading all the tests. Teachers using the program estimated that MIRP required about two to three extra evening hours per day in the first three months of Year One, diminishing to about one to two hours of work each night in Year Two, after November. Materials can be used the year after development by each teacher, but from my observations and teacher statements, each new teacher using MIRP has a hell of a first year. The program is physically demanding, teachers acting in a Sesame-Street on fashion, cheerleading as well as teaching, and acccording to teachers it is emotionally draining, with the stress on teachers being enthusiastic, upbeat, and using what to this researcher (and I believe to the students), is sappy and phoney language -- "I love it when the students can hear each other think. . ."

But in general, my observations were that the kids looked forward to MIRP sessions and seemed to love the approach because of its action and noise, its group activity and non-punitive approach, though the strain in energy was telling on some teachers by March, 1978. If they are not highly committed to begin with (in one of the school's wings this seems to be the case), I'm not sure whether it will be used next year. Lucky for me, my problem was not finding out just what the innovation is; that at least is clear. You know MIRP is going on in a classroom when you walk down the hall and hear ten kids in the third grade shout out in unison, "Grandmother! g! r! a! n! d! m! o! t! h! e! r!" Just follow the noise.

It should be noted here that in February and March, 1977, the linking agent felt uneasy about what she thought of as the regimentation aspect of the MIRP teaching process, the drill. Later, as she saw teachers using MIRP, she became

an active supporter of the program. (My own feelings are that it does have some regimentation, but it does have creative writing, is not as bad in practice as in theory, and can be "humanized" beyond the rather robotic way the inventor wants it to be used, with stopwatches everywhere.)

Year One of Bridgetown's Consortium involvement was devoted to problem identification, review of innovations, and selection of the innovation for Year Two implementation. In August, between Year One and Year Two, the staff of Bridgetown Elementary School, along with staff from another Consortium school in the state adopting MIRP, were trained together by out-of-state MIRP certified trainers (again, not Consortium staff) in a one-week, five-day training session set up by Ms. Hartwell and paid for by the Consortium Project, which also gave each participating teacher an honorarium for their time. A motel on a main circumferential highway around Eastern City was used for training. (In Year Two, in late January, 1978, refresher training by a different out-of-state MIRP trainer was carried out.)

In general, unlike many innovations, MIRP is a recognizable, clear change in teacher behavior, student behavior, teacher student-relationships, and is heavily demanding on volunteered extra teacher hours. This last is critical for its probable future in this school.

Training

In June, 1977, at the beginning of the summer before the MIRP training, some uneasiness was visible. The linking agent observed:

> We began with a brief discussion of the training. I asked how teachers were feeling about taking the training since several of them had threatened not to go through with it. I said that I wanted to make sure that teachers still wanted to go through with this program since it seemed that support was lacking in other places. They assured me that teachers were looking forward to the plan, and, in fact, (the assistant principal, K-3) mentioned that questions were now arising like, "Do you think I'll really be able to do it?"

The training was carried out during a five day period, Monday through Friday, at the end of August, 1977. A consultant and expert MIRP trainer worked with the Bridgetown and the other school for that week. The following are representative comments on the August training session and the January 25, 1978, booster session

(conducted by a different trainer):

> (all 4-6 grade teachers, composite answer) Training sessions were too concentrated. Too much taught in a short period of time.
>
> The training sessions are very useful primarily because the trainers really know the program, have used it, and are enthusiastic about it. I wish last August's had been earlier in the summer, to give me more time before school to prepare materials.
>
> Training sessions were extremely valuable. The program could not have been implemented and successfully sustained without them.

The training session in mid-January, 1978, was observed by this researcher. The trainer (not the one who worked in August) appeared extremely high-pressure, and rapid-fire. About half of the teachers present felt that the trainer was too high-pressure. I would agree. She came on strong to a predominantly passive audience. On the other hand, the training clearly worked, in that the teachers did seem to have a reasonably clear grasp of the MIRP approach, though they later used it to differing degrees in their everyday work. The main elements of the approach, as described above, were apparent in all classrooms. My overall judgement is that better training would have been about twice to three times as long, and less concentrated after the initial week. Money limitations made this impossible.

Implementation

The understanding of the implementation process in Bridgetown requires looking in detail at a bargain made at the start of the year to please the teachers who were volunteering for MIRP. They had experienced classroom teaching for years in Bridgetown as a series of interruptions caused by the various special programs. As a consequence, they feared that the demands of these programs, especially the Title I program, would make it impossible for them to concentrate during the course of the year. They bargained with the administration for the following quid pro quo: you keep Title I out of our hair and we will do the MIRP program. Naturally, the director of the school's Title I program saw the new innovation as an assault on her turf, her competence, and her program because the principal agreed with the teachers. As early as November, 1977, (Year Two) the linking agent reported that the Title I director was upset about the program and:

> She refused to participate in planning next year even though that would be a way for her to protect her turf and get her oar in on how her staff can and cannot be used. (The assistant superintendent subsequently said he'd make her attend.)

As the year progressed, the following processes seemed to characterize the implementation. First, the lower grades (K-3) seemed to both use the MIRP approach more thoroughly than 4-6, and to be more tightly knit as an action group. Second, for all grades the Decision Making Group, by agreement, met only half as frequently as in the first year. Third, as the year wore on, the role of the linking agent became less clear until the early spring, when it was transformed into a newer role. Fourth, a determined effort was made by the linking agent, in planning for Year Three, to integrate the Title I and other special services staff into activities involving the MIRP program. Each of these will be discussed in turn.

First, the MIRP program was more thoroughly applied in grades K-3 than in grades 4-6. In the researcher's opinion, it seemed more tailored to lower grades. Second, as both assistant principals pointed out, the gap in ability between children is far greater by grades 4 and 5 than in grade 1. This problem made it nearly impossible for some sixth grade teachers to do the program without separate planning for students reading at grade 2 and 3 level. More specialized skills also are needed at higher grades, resulting in an almost impossible number of extra hours of work (which averaged six to eight hours per week on normal MIRP work over the year).

In addition there was the social cohesion of the lower grade teacher group: the teachers and the assistant principal (wing head) were much closer in the lower grade wing, both MIRP and non-MIRP teachers being part of a close-knit group with a female head. They had an informal agreement to have a beer every Friday afternoon at one of the local spots. No such group activity existed for the upper wing. Several reasons are possible.

The upper wing administrator was a traditional, married male who may have felt uncomfortable going out "with the boys" when all the boys were, in fact, women. Second, his style tended to be that of the supportive but somewhat flamboyant individualist who did not act well as a group team leader, much as he was able, and willing to help people as individuals (he was well liked, as was the other assistant principal, by the teachers working under and with him). Finally, the career commitment to elementary school teaching appeared weaker among teachers in the upper group, some of whom had announced career plans to go into counseling or another non-classroom post. In sum, the

combination of objective and subjective factors, and the field observations, tended to lead to the conclusion that the program was more extensively implemented in the lower grades.

Second, the Decision Making Group, whose function it was in Year One to represent the various interests, identify reading problems and choose a program for Year Two, seemed to meet increasingly infrequently and for very short periods of time in Year Two. In addition, the lack of parent participation (they were not involved in the choice of MIRP, and did not get invited to the monthly one-hour meetings in Year Two) characterized the previously mentioned gap between school and community. Strong upper administration support for the program from the assistant superintendent of the Bridgetown school system helped ultimately in gaining funds for Year Three. To this researcher, parents seemed simply not to be aware of the existence of the MIRP program.

A third issue was the changing role of the linking agent. In Year One she was clearly the one in control: the introducer of new program ideas, the runner of sessions with the Decision Making Group to decide which program to adopt, etc. This era came to a close with the training in August, 1977, between the end of Year One and the beginning of Year Two, (the first implementation year, 1977-1978). As she said herself, she was no expert on MIRP, and those who were now took over and did the training. She then became a kind of support agent, but had difficulty defining her role during the period October to December, 1977. About December, 1977, of Year Two she began to redefine her role as that of a program coordinator and training arranger, with two more roles added by the spring of this the second year: program evaluation designer and planner for Year Three.

A final issue was the deliberate attempt on the part of the linking agent midway through Year Two to bring the Title I staff and the MIRP teachers back together. She believed that if this could not be done, it would remain as an important obstruction to the further spread of the program. Again, it should be noted that the linking agent had no control over the initial quid pro quo which caused the trouble. But she did direct much effort at this goal in the last month of observation.

As of this writing, early June, 1978, plans of the Bridgetown School are to continue to use MIRP in grades K-3 and possibly some of the teachers will continue using it in grades 4-6. Additionally, some plans will be made for extension of MIRP into some subjects in the junior high, probably English. Money exists in the budget of the school system for summer 1978 training. If I were forced, I would

say the program was successfully adopted by the lower wing teachers who used it, only partly so by the upper wing, and had minimal impact on the rest of the teachers in the Bridgetown School. The plans of the assistant superintendent and the linking agency's Consortium Project do involve, however, an attempt at extending MIRP's influence and scope in the next academic year. I cannot vouch for the success of this effort, based on what I have seen this year. On the other hand, it might be possible. It seems to me, however, that extension into the lower grades makes more sense, given the results to date.

IV. DECISION MAKING ROLES

A brief review of the decision making roles involved in this innovation, along with a summary assessment of their probable impact on the MIRP program is possible. I would like to review the roles of the linking agent, the assistant superintendent of the Bridgetown school system, the principal of the Bridgetown School, the two assistant principals (wing heads) for K-3 and 4-6, the teachers, the parents, and the Decision Making Group.

The Linking Agent

Ms. Hartwell carried out her role in an active, sometimes even slightly aggressive way (bugging people to set up meetings they wouldn't have held, constant phone follow-up), in a school system which had a somewhat "mushy" and bureaucratic character as a system. That is, she kept on pushing but the system was often slow and blurred in responding. Her role did definitely involve making decisions, but in Bridgetown, these were often passive, let-it-be decisions. For example, when the Title I teachers were excluded from the process, she stood by helpless. Second, while she would have liked the teachers and administrators to have far more parent participation in the innovation, she did not put up a fight when the staff and administration expressed great disinterest, even disdain, for parent involvement. On the other hand, she made an early decision to hound, push, and keep the program active, not to let them forget MIRP or her. Her role during Year One involved a series of decisions on helping to keep the consideration of innovation options open. After MIRP got under way in Year Two, the period of role uncertainty for the linking agent was soon resolved by what I think was a correct strategic decision to focus, especially in the spring of Year Two, on the rivalry between Title I and MIRP, a rivalry which could cause great problems in Year Three.

Assistant Superintendent of the Bridgetown School System

The assistant superintendent was a friend of the project from the start, but his decision to intervene in the rivalry problem between Title I and MIRP may have added to the alienation that began to develop between the project and the school. The linking agent was put in a difficult position by the activities of the assistant superintendent: needing his support for the project, but working, especially toward the end of Year Two, to undo some of the damage caused by his "support." On the other hand, again toward the end of Year Two, the assistant superintendent acted to ensure funds for MIRP for Year Three.

The Principal of the Bridgetown School

He can be considered a mild supporter of the project, but he was primarily busy with other things. On some occasions his confusing style of administration resulted in some enmity between himself and the K-3 wing head. Also, the principal was not always supportive in Year One to allow teacher time off to visit potential adoptions. But in general, he mildly supported the program without making any major decisions on a day-to-day basis, leaving that to the wing heads and Ms. Hartwell of the Linking Agency's Consortium Project.

Assistant Principals

The two assistant principals have been the main supporters of the MIRP program, the logistic decision makers and the program's interpreters to non-MIRP teachers under their command. In the case of grades K-3, the assistant principal also acted as a social coordinator of group spirit in general, which may have had a special positive effect on the successful institutionalization of MIRP with her teachers.

Teachers

Teachers seemed to react to the MIRP program with two kinds of decisions: first, whether to be fully or only partly committed to it, and second, whether to recommend it to other teachers. I would estimate that at least half of the Bridgetown staff just "went along" and not too many were enthusiastic about recommending it to what was, in fact, the majority of the staff who were not involved at all.

Parents

Parents were not involved in the MIRP program, by deliberate attitude and choice of the Bridgetown teachers and administrators.

Decision Making Group

In my opinion, the Decision Making Group was not significantly functional in a systems sense; i.e., in making key decisions on the program as it went along, meeting regularly and actively pursuing the goals of the MIRP adoption. It did meet, but less frequently than in Year One, with less attendance and for shorter times. This was not the fault of the linking agent, who struggled mightily to make this part of the structure work. Given the available time of the linking agent and her other responsibilities, it is a wonder to me that the DMG activities were kept going at all in this site.

V. EMERGENT ISSUES AND CONCLUSION

Emergent Issues

We will discuss the issues which emerged from this attempt at educational innovation under three headings: the linear, rational model for change implied in the design; the MIRP innovation viewed against the background of the school; and the issue of who benefits and who pays. We will conclude this section with an overall summary statement on the MIRP program in Bridgetown during Years One and Two.

The linear, rational model for change was the model implied by the actions of Ms. Hartwell, the Consortium linking agent. (It should be noted that the "linear" model is a conceptual formulation developed by the field researchers and Consortium research supervisor, not the linking agent.) Against attempts at delay, signs of growing restiveness by some members of the school teaching staff (especially on the extra work involved in MIRP), the model was held to. In spite of some views about the "passive" role of linking agents, in this setting Ms. Hartwell was close to a single agent of change. Her invitation to the system and the school was due to the assistant superintendent's previous positive experience with the Linking Agency. But from then on, an active, aggressive attempt was made by the linking agent to prop up a sagging program improvement process engaged in by an only mildly

committed school staff with a lot of other problems, and problem children, to attend to.

The training in August, 1977, between the first and second year helped increase the interest on the part of the teachers who had tentatively volunteered. But the actual success of the program was centered in the lower grades and was particularly based on the social cohesion created by the assistant principal in charge of K-3. Furthermore, the MIRP program appears far better tailored to the needs of K-3 than to older children, especially in a school system which has a growing ability gap between children in each succeeding grade as the years pass.

In Year One, the Consortium linking agent definitely acted successfully on the linear change agent model. But because of the size of the school and her limited time, her influence on the total milieu of Bridgetown School was nil once adoption of MIRP took place. Milieu factors, especially the degree of dedication of staff and the relevance of MIRP to perceived needs, became far more important to the adoption of the program in Year Two than the activities of the linking agent. By the end of Year Two, she was serving more as a trouble shooter than as a change agent. Still, the program went forward to partial institutionalization by the end of Year Two.

The MIRP innovation had to fight a disinterested and to some extent unfriendly social context. Viewed within this social context, and given the extent of problems natural to a welfare population and a school in a poverty area, an over-programmed, over-bureaucratized school structure with many special programs, with vested empires (such as the Title I staff) and a very large school loosely administered, it was a wonder that the program simply didn't get lost. In my observations, less of MIRP seemed to be happening on an hour-to-hour basis in the participating teachers' classrooms than in the other school I studied which also adopted MIRP and also had Ms. Hartwell as the Consortium linking agent. The put-in-your-time attitude of some teachers, especially those in the background and not part of the MIRP adoption, created a disinterested climate for the MIRP staff. Add to this the faltering motivation of a minority of MIRP staff teachers,and you get the picture of a program which was carried out in the school and was pushed from outside, but which did not catch on.

Who benefits and who pays are clear emergent issues whenever and wherever this particular innovation is tried, especially given the time and energy demands of it. Clearly the assistant superintendent benefitted in the career sense, in burnishing his image as a progressive

administrator. The two assistant principals varied in their attitudes. While both supported the program, it appears that the K-3 head put in a little more of her time in dealing with the details of the program than did the 4-6 head. The teachers complained, as a group, about the extra time involved, but the lower wing group saw more payoff, in terms of student progress, for the extra work put in. Parents may have benefitted if the program helped their kids in reading-related skills, but there was no input from them and they had no participation observable to this researcher.

Conclusion

Based on previous experiences of the assistant superintendent, the upper administration of Bridgetown Public Schools was favorably predisposed at the start of this program to the Linking Agency and its Consortium Project. The principal, who was new to the school at the start of Year One, and the assistant principals supported the program but had many other responsibilities. The teachers passively participated except for a group in grades K-3. The program, in my opinion, was incorporated into the K-3 curriculum but not into the 4-6 curriculum; some firings and turnover at the end of Year Two in the upper wing will intensify this. The linking agent and the assistant superintendent have some plans for the expansion of MIRP in the system next year (possibly to the junior high, to English classes, etc.). I think they are unwarranted given the degree of support shown this year, but I believe they will go ahead anyway.

APPENDIX

BACKGROUND TO CASE STUDY DATA COLLECTION AND DEVELOPMENT

Describing the basic strategy for carrying out this case study requires a brief review of the structure within which it is being carried out, the cooperative, collegial nature of the research effort, and conflicts between the case researcher and Linking Agency staff, especially the linking agent, over the differing priorities betwen service and research, especially the issue of confidentiality.

The first and most important fact is the extremely poor timing of the research effort. The researcher was not given a contract to study the three-year innovation process until November of its second year. Any description of events in year 1 and in the first two months of year 2 of the innovation are thus historical reconstruction, through the potentially fallible means of linking agent contact reports and retrospective interviewing by this researcher.

The Linking Agency referred to above is a private, non-profit educational service organization, specializing in two main areas: the development and implementation of innovative service programs in education including intervention in school systems by "trainers," "linking agents" or some other representative of the Linking Agency; and contracts, usually with federal education bureaus such as the Office of Education and the National Institute of Education, to "diffuse" innovations -- new ideas in education -- from the inventors of the ideas to the potential users or provide technical assistance to schools and other agencies. The linking agency's Consortium Project is carrying out and studying the diffusion of federally validated R&D based reading programs in twenty-six schools in six states across the country. The Consortium Project uses linking agents as the direct contacts between schools and R&D products and resources. This researcher is studying two of the four schools in Eastern State in which the Consortium Project is attempting to introduce innovations.

In Eastern State, Ms. Lauren Hartwell is the Consortium Project's linking agent; she works directly with each of the four schools participating in the program. In the two schools I am studying in Eastern State, Ms. Hartwell worked in Year One to help the school administration and faculty to identify needs in the area of reading, and select one reading program out of a pool of possibilities.

The case researcher is working as part of a three-person team; of the other two researchers, one is studying two schools in a northern mid-western state and the other two schools in a relatively rural plains mid-western state.

All three researchers work under the supervision of the Consortium Project's research director.

The three researchers met with the research director at the beginning of the project to get research ground rules set, and met again in early March to compare notes and progress up to that point.

The project allows the case researchers freedom to use whatever research approaches they wish. This includes sociological participant observation with the taking of field notes, as in such works as Hughes, Becker, Geer and Strauss, Boys in White, or Rosalie Wax, Doing Fieldwork. All available records, e.g., linking agent contact reports (prepared after each visit to a site school), and demographic data gathered by the Linking Agency were made available to the researcher.

In the course of the research, a conflict arose on the subject of confidentiality. In her frequent site visits as the Consortium Project linking agent, Ms. Hartwell had established relationships with school staff of such depth that in some cases she became privy to very personal information on the job behavior of some of her clients; she recorded some of this data in contact reports. The information became important to the researcher in helping to understand actions of key school staff members. The linking agent became uneasy about my dogging her footsteps and using her records, feeling a kind of invasion of privacy -- hers and her clients' -- was taking place. This is a classic conflict between the needs of research and the needs of service delivery. The conflict was resolved by Ms. Hartwell agreeing that all her entries are to be considered research data (she may censor if she wishes), that the researcher has free access to the site and has his own sources of data, and that no site will see the research report until the linking agent is well out of it, never to return, so as not to put her in a difficult situation. Of course, all reports, including this one, are coded: Ms. Hartwell is not the linking agent's real name and the name given the site is a pseudonym. For more on this problem, see Stein, Vidich, and Bensman, Reflections on Community Studies.

Epilogue to Bridgetown Elementary School Case Study

Introduction

This epilogue will describe events and activities that have occurred at Bridgetown Elementary School during Year Three of the Consortium Project. It will detail the nature and extent of use of the MIRP reading program, the Year Three activities of the linking agent, and the staffing and other changes that, although not a direct function of the project, have directly affected its implementation. It will further offer the retrospective views of site actors about the effectiveness of the program they selected in Year One, its overall effects on the school and program implementers, and the role of the linking agent and decision making process over the project's three-year life.

Following an assessment of the process at its most visible or "surface level," (i.e., those discrete activities and events planned and connected with program selection, implementation and extension), an exploration of the "deep level" or underlying dynamics within the school context will be made. These underlying dynamics are those that are clearly interwoven with events and attitudes having a direct bearing on the Consortium process, but that may reflect the more generalized organizational climate of Bridgetown Elementary School. Although the data available during the three-year period covered by this study make definitive statements about cause and effect impossible, the epilogue will draw on what is known in order to speculate about the reciprocal relationship between school context and the project.

The Product

During Year Three, the Consortium Project was expanded within the original Bridgetown Elementary School site, as well as to other schools in the district. Within the original site, six new classroom teachers began to use the MIRP method, after attending a five-day training session in mid-July 1978. The inclusion of 15 Title I teachers

was effectuated by means of a brief, three-day training session in MIRP methods, conducted at the end of June. In addition, two days of advanced training were held in late June for the original group of 10 implementing teachers.

Expansion of the MIRP program elsewhere in the district, reaching approximately 300 additional students, occurred when 30 new teachers in a junior high and three other elementary schools volunteered to become involved. Although the decision to permit such expansion was made by the assistant superintendent (a strong supporter of the project since its inception), the voluntary involvement of 30 new teachers resulted from the efforts of a few enthusiastic original users, who themselves volunteered to talk about MIRP with other teachers outside their building.

Nearly all of the original classroom users at the original site remained with the program. Changes in assignment accounted for the only exceptions to this rule, and were confined to the grades 4-6 wing. One of the original users, transferred to a position as Title I counselor, no longer used the program. Two others became Title I teachers and applied the MIRP methods in this new assignment with Title I students. The addition of two new classroom teachers to the program in grades 4-6, however, kept the number of MIRP users fairly stable, constituting about half of the potential users in that wing.

In the K-3 wing of the building, where enthusiasm for the program is extremely high, four new teachers were added, making the wing's instructional approach to reading almost exclusively MIRP. The high level of commitment to MIRP among K-3 teachers is illustrated by the fact that those new to the program spent eighteen days during the summer, with no additional pay, working to prepare materials for classroom use. Similarly, some of the Year Two implementers from this wing volunteered to serve as presenters of the MIRP program at a Consortium conference of urban schools, and spent time without extra pay during their vacation preparing for this event.

One of the interesting aspects of the MIRP program at Bridgetown is the difference in intensity of use between the K-3 and 4-6 wings. Not only is MIRP used by a greater proportion of K-3 teachers than is the case in the 4-6 wing, but also its use conforms more faithfully to the developer's original design. In the 4-6 wing, less time is spent using the methods each day, a factor that relates directly to how extensively and exclusively MIRP is applied to teaching the various reading and language skills. As was stated in the original case study, in Year Two most of the grades 4-6 teachers had opted not to

exclude their students from the Title I program, an arrangement that was offered to MIRP teachers so that they could have their children with them for a full two and a half hour time block of MIRP instruction.

During Year Three, the grades 4-6 schedule was further modified so that one day's instructional agenda was now spread over two. This allowed time to work with small reading groups, a practice teachers had used before implementation of the MIRP program. It also relieved the time pressure teachers had experienced during Year Two. As one teacher explained, "It (MIRP) was just 'beat the clock.' It got so you were more concerned with time than anything." In addition to modifying the time frame, teachers in the 4-6 wing used previously available materials to a great extent and cut down on much of the MIRP record-keeping, described as so burdensome that, "You would need a secretary" to do it all.

Modifications in the MIRP in the K-3 wing were far more minor -- i.e., modifying charts for record-keeping to make the format easier for the youngsters to use. However, because of the addition of so many new teachers, the Year Two practice of scheduling subject-matter specialists (e.g., art, physical education) around the MIRP teaching period became impossible, resulting in a shorter time block available to K-3 teachers as well. Also, teachers new to the program in Year Three were not offered the option of keeping their students out of the Title I program. These modifications were neither desired nor well-received by the K-3 MIRP teachers.

The retrospective views of the program's effectiveness and its broad effect on the school is generally positive among teachers and administrators at Bridgetown; but the degree of enthusiasm is different in the K-3 and 4-6 wings. All teachers interviewed noted that the MIRP method was taxing in terms of both materials preparation and constant oral activity required of the instructor. (One teacher developed polyps on her MIRP aggravated vocal cords!) Yet all mentioned that MIRP had helped them to organize their classrooms better and was very much enjoyed by their students.

One teacher pointed out that the program's high level of structure had the effect of diminishing the amount of energy she had previously devoted to managing students' behavior in the classroom. Within the tight activity structure, students were able to take more responsibility for their own behavior. This effect also seemed to carry over into activity outside the classroom. Some teachers reported that the children's success in learning language skills by the MIRP methods made them more aware of their

students' capabilities. They also reported their belief that the youngsters themselves were feeling more competent and important.

Teachers in both wings reported that they experienced a carry over of MIRP methods into their teaching of other subjects, primarily making them more precise and aware of their own teaching behavior. The program also stimulated their professional interest in teaching reading and language skills, and prompted several teachers in the K-3 wing to pursue Master's level studies in reading.

All teachers interviewed said that their students' reading ability was definitely improved by use of the program; but between teachers in the two wings there were substantial differences about how critical this particular program was in achieving that outcome. For the grades 4-6 teachers, MIRP was "just another approach" to be used in conjunction with individual teaching and learning styles. For the grades K-3 teachers, it was viewed as essential and incomparable -- an attitude clearly not shared by the upper grade teachers. A number of the K-3 teachers had had extensive graduate level training in reading, but believed that MIRP was the first truly effective method they had ever been taught. One of the 4-6 teachers expressed the generally-held view of those in her wing when she characterized the K-3 teachers as treating MIRP "like a religion, like being re-born."

The Role of the Linking Agent

The linking agent described her role during Year Three of the Consortium Project at Bridgetown as "fairly minimal," particularly in comparison to what it had been previously. Throughout the year, most of her efforts focused on expanding the program elsewhere in the district, and she met monthly with the district-wide reading coordinator (K-8) to discuss matters such as the training and support of teachers new to the program. She also served as a liaison with the central administration concerning program expansion, and at the beginning of the year initiated a discussion about conducting a program evaluation, to be supported in part by funds from her Linking Agency. Although some questionnaires were eventually administered to teachers and parents, there was little interest in a more extensive program evaluation and this early discussion bore no fruit.

The linking agent's primary contact with MIRP teachers at Bridgetown -- apart from informal encounters throughout the year, to ask how things were going -- was also related to extending the reach of the program in some way. She

met once with those K-3 teachers who had agreed to present the MIRP program at an urban conference (sponsored by the Linking Agency), and helped them plan the presentation. She also met once with the grades 4-6 teachers to discuss the possibility of bringing junior high school students into their classes to help with the program; this idea "probably faded" and there was no follow-up activity on it. Another idea that was "apologetically rejected" by the grades 4-6 teachers was that they become involved in MIRP dissemination activites in the district.

Another function was served by the linking agent for a brief period, spanning the first few weeks of school until early October. She was heavily involved in an explosive situation (to be discussed in greater detail under Process, below) that erupted between the K-3 MIRP teachers and the Title I director and staff. The immediate issue was whether to discontinue the previous year's practice of keeping MIRP students out of the Title I program, at the discretion of individual teachers. Related to this issue was whether to change the "contract" that the assistant superintendent (who by Year Three had gone to assume the superintendency of another district) had made in Year Two with those who began MIRP implementation; giving them a two and one-half hour block of uninterrupted time with their students. This practice necessitated the scheduling of specialists around the MIRP program, rather than the reverse.

Although the linking agent participated in a meeting between the principal and the agitated K-3 teachers (the Title I staff was invited to attend, but none did), her efforts at intervention, which brought her to the school almost every day, were deliberately behind-the-scenes. Given the heat of the situation, she felt that more could be resolved by serving as a negotiator between individuals who were likely only to harangue one another in a group situation. As a go-between, the linking agent was able to work through the administrative heads of the two factions -- the K-3 assistant principal and the Title I director -- to work out a compromise whereby one hour with students was kept free of interruption for the MIRP teachers and the Title I staff agreed to make a "strong attempt" to coordinate their teaching with what students were doing in the MIRP classrooms. Actual coordination, however, was left to the discretion of each Title I teacher.

The site actors' retrospective views of the linking agent's role were both consistent and positive. All thought that among her most important roles during Year One was "keeping people on track." She was also viewed as performing the necessary function of liaison with the central administration and the funding source. Offering

reassurance and support to teachers during their first year of program implementation was also mentioned by an administrator to be a critical role, and was reflected indirectly in the comments of the teachers themselves. The "fairly minimal" role that the linking agent opted to play throughout most of Year Three was viewed as appropriate by those who had been involved with the project since its inception.

The Process

For the sake of clarity, it is useful to report on the process at two levels. At one level was the explicitly designed problem solving and decision making process that was a deliberate component of the Consortium Project. Since this process and the structured problem solving steps it entailed were conscious and imported from outside the school, we may refer to it as the "surface level" process. The school as an ongoing organization, however, had a latent and indigenous process of its own, which we may call the "deep level."

An examination of the deep level process as it played itself out during the life of the Consortium Project reveals the unanticipated dynamics and events that occurred. These dynamics and events had an impact on the conscious and explicit Consortium problem solving process being enacted at the surface level. The deep-level dynamics at once mirrored and affected the school climate and context. Thus, the description and interpretation of the deliberate Consortium problem solving process as it occurred at Bridgetown spans two sections of this epilogue -- Process and School Context.

At the surface level, one may report that the linear, rational decision making model was adhered to by the linking agent in Year One, but that teachers and administrators interviewed at the end of Year Three evidenced little or no awareness of it as an entity or model that might be used to address new problems. What was significant to the site actors was the MIRP program's operation in classrooms and its effect on teaching behavior and on the staff's interpersonal or intergroup relations. One teacher who had been in the original DMG said that at first she thought those who participated in the decision making process were being "guinea pigs in an experiment," conceived by people who were interested in the "correct steps" of group process.

In fact, near the end of Year Two, when asked by the linking agent if there were needs that could be addressed by continued meetings of the DMG, the consensus was that

there were none, and that it was pointless for the K-3 and the 4-6 groups to meet any more with one another since their problems were so different. Although when they started implementation, teachers new to the program in the K-3 wing did meet together almost every day after school to compare notes, there were no DMG meetings at all during Year Three. The only formal meetings held about MIRP were initiated by the linking agent, as noted earlier, and concerned extension or dissemination of the program outside of the building.

All of the teachers interviewed said that their reason for joining the Consortium Project was to improve their teaching methods. Although they acknowledged the DMG-defined problem of a large minority of students with limited English and with poor reading skills and low self-esteem, their judgment about the program was based on how it had affected them as teachers. This is not to imply that what teachers do is unrelated to what students learn; nor that Bridgetown teachers perceive this to be the case. Rather, it is simply to stress that individuals entered the project with their own professional purposes in mind, and that the formalities of problem definition and program selection faded in their retrospective view of the process. In fact, teachers' comments about improving the process consisted primarily of suggestions to conduct the initial training session further in advance of the implementation year (training for the first group of teachers was held in the latter part of August between Years One and Two), to allow more time for materials preparation.

Administrators had some retrospective views of the process as well, none of which reflected an awareness of linear, rational problem solving and decision making. The principal (who had to leave at the end of Year Three) had nothing to say about it; what was important to him was the fact that the teachers worked so hard and "made (him) proud of the profession." He also thought that the fact that so little outside funding (for materials and teacher training) had been involved was of poltical value, because it made it easier to sell the idea to a school committee concerned about having to absorb heavy costs when the outside resources ended. In addition, the principal thought in retrospect that the decision to allow MIRP teachers to keep their students out of the Title I program had been ill-conceived because of the precedent it set and the trouble it caused.

A suggestion for improvement made by the grades 4-6 assistant principal was to insist that every teacher become involved with the program, to avoid the likelihood that a student would be introduced to the program in one

year but taught by different methods the next for lack of teachers in the next grade who wished to use the program. This same administrator, however, reported that he had not tried to exert influence or force with any teacher to try the program because he likes to "get along" with his teachers.

At the deeper level, the process throughout the three years is best characterized as one of intra-group coheisveness and inter-group conflict or antagonism. The groups that came into play were the K-3 wing teachers and assistant principal, the 4-6 wing teachers, and the Title I director and her staff.

The level of enthusiasm, commitment and program implementation differed markedly in each grade-level wing of the building. The K-3 teachers cited a great many instances of improved student achievement, hours of time spent working together almost every day after school (the assistant principal for this wing said that she had had to intervene once with the complaining spouse of one of the teachers), and they felt, as one teacher put it, that the program "has rejuvenated us." Their efforts were rewarded with constant high praise from their assistant principal, who evidenced a rather maternal attitude toward them and functioned somewhat like a coach. During the site visit, for example, she made the following statement in the teachers' lounge in the presence of many staff: "The faculty is unique. Besides being the best-looking and the best teachers in the city (laughs), they also have more degrees than anybody put together in the city. So, in other words, they always, and <u>together</u>, took graduate courses. And it was a team effort, or a friend effort."

In contrast, the 4-6 wing teachers were positive about the program and their involvement in it, but complained about the amount of time it required. In fact, they eliminated many of the time-consuming elements and continued to use materials they had previously employed for reading and language instruction. Although supported in their efforts and in their decisions to use what they wished of the MIRP approach, they did not receive the same kind of evangelical coaching from their assistant principal, who believed it was not prudent to make "fair-headed" people out of anyone under his jurisdiction.

Two major factors appear as possible influences on this inter-group difference. First, the age and level of linguistic maturity found in children at lower and at upper elementary school grades differs, and the K-3 teachers no doubt did experience more success with the younger children than did the 4-6 teachers with their older students. In the early grades children were first

learning to decode and comprehend at a basic level and had not had prior reading instruction using methods other than those of the MIRP program. In general, younger students may derive more immediate benefit from the highly structured MIRP method, with its emphasis on oral repetition, than do older ones. In addition, the highly individualized nature of the program is likely far less cumbersome at the lower grades, where the differences in reading level among children span a far narrower range than at the upper elementary grades.

Second, the administrative style of each of the two assistant principals may well have been an equally, if not more, important factor. In the K-3 wing, the assistant principal is constantly on the move and visible throughout the building, helping, providing praise and support, and taking on whatever onerous chores she can to lessen the burden on teachers. She spends long hours on the job and values such behavior in others. Additionally, the K-3 assistant principal has been active in union activities that have had an adversarial character at Bridgetown in recent years. The 4-6 assistant principal, in contrast, is slower-paced and more likely to remain in his office, observing the corridor from his desk. He is far less of an activist within the political climate of the school system (in fact, he will become the new building principal in the 1979-80 school year) believing that it is best not to complain or make waves.

The underlying dynamics of intra-group cohesiveness and inter-group conflict were evident in the problem that emerged concerning the Title I program. The Title I problem, and the negative attitude of Title I staff toward the MIRP program, had its beginnings during the project's first year. When the DMG was first established, it included the two assistant principals, the K-8 district-wide reading coordinator, the Title I director, and a few teachers. The K-3 assistant principal indicated to the linking agent at that time that she thought the group had too many administrators. The assistant principal then talked with the Title I director about this problem, and it was decided that the director would send a Title I teacher in her own place. The Title I director's involvement from this point on was minimal, until she heard of the DMG decision to offer MIRP teachers the option to remove their youngstes from the Title I program. At that point, she complained vehemently that she had had no part in the decision. The assistant superintendent, at the time (since gone), who was a key supporter of the project, spoke with her about this, and called her on the fact that she had opted to send a teacher representative to the meetings.

At his insistence, the decision was to stand, and not long before the opening of school in Year Two he gave the directive that itinerant subject-matter specialists throughout the district were to be re-scheduled around the promised two and one-half hour block of uninterrupted time that MIRP teachers were to have available if they wished. The importance he attached to the program is underscored by the fact that this was done at a time when the administration was setting the stage for contract negotiations and an effort was being made to assign additional itinerant specialist time to the Bridgetown School to edstablish the precedent of a fuller teaching load for that segment of the bargaining unit.

At the beginning of Year Three, with the former assistant superintendent gone, an administrative decision was made to eliminate both the option of keeping youngsters out of the Title I program and the practice of scheduling specialists around MIRP. This was of no consequence to the 4-6 teachers, most of whom had not taken the option, but it infuriated the K-3 teachers and their assistant principal. As a first grade teacher expressed, "We felt put down." It was at this point that the linking agent became heavily involved (as described above) in trying to negotiate between the factions, working primarily through the administrative heads of each. Although a compromise was worked out, the rancor between the Title I and K-3 groups remained. And the 4-6 teachers, who had little involvement in the issue, continued to take a dim view of the K-3 teachers' attitudes and actions.

Although inter-group conflict between the Title I staff and the K-3 wing was the most dramatic and concrete, a variant existed between the MIRP teachers in the K-3 and 4-6 groups as well. The teachers' decision not to meet together during Year Three, but rather to function as separate groups within their own wings, reflected the general situation that developed with progress of the MIRP program. The 4-6 teachers were put off by the evangelical enthusiasm for the program displayed by the K-3 teachers; and each group was critical of the other's way of using it. The 4-6 teachers thought that the others were accepting the program uncritically, and believed that their own problems in teaching older children were not understood by their lower grade counterparts. The K-3 teachers, who adorned themselves in MIRP tee-shirts and other regalia, felt though that the 4-6 teachers were not sufficiently committed to the program. This antagonism was carried outside the building, and even created a tense atmosphere in an after-school dance class that (for some unexplained reason) was made up of those involved in implementing the MIRP program.

Thus, an effect of the Consortium Project might be described as creating friction in the building among the three largest groups on the staff. On the other hand, considering elements of the school context and climate, it is possible that the MIRP project simply became an arena in which pre-existing dynamics were played out.

The School Context

In addition to the social and organizational context described in the case study of Years One and Two, some other elements enter into the backdrop against which Consortium Project action unfolded. These elements reinforce the picture of a school comprised of factions, each with an interest or position to assert.

The Title I program in the Bridgetown district is large, and brings a substantial amount of outside funding to the schools. In recent years of enrollment decline, one of its functions has been to provide jobs for junior classroom teachers who would otherwise be laid off. The Title I director thus has a large and important program under her jurisdiction, which she "fights for;" and she is at least as weighty an administrative force as are the assistant principals who, in fact, run a school-within-a-school. According to the K-3 assistant principal, who is equally protective of her program, the Title I director is not easy to deal with. The director also has a close personal relationship with the K-8 reading coordinator, who was described by one of the K-3 teachers as having had a negative attitude about the project in its first two years, although this attitude was reportedly expressed more through passive non-support than through active opposition.

Title I teachers were described by the Bridgetown principal as being generally less well-trained than their regular classroom counterparts and as being targets of classroom teachers' resentment of "outside" specialists. According to him, the MIRP training they received was also of shorter duration and more "perfunctory," primarily as a result of funding constraints. MIRP classroom teachers and a former MIRP classroom teacher (transferred to the Title I program) stated that the Title I staff considered MIRP to be a threat, one with potential to eliminate their jobs. During the crisis that erupted in September 1978 over scheduling children into the Title I program, the linking agent learned that the Title I teachers were operating under a misconception. They thought that they were prohibited by Title I policy from using MIRP in their tutorial work. Although this misconception wa. cleared up as a result of the linking agent's efforts, it is not

clear how it developed in the first place and seems a further indication of the conflicts described above.

K-3 teachers have been recipients of disapproval and rancor as well, and reportedly their style of advocating a position in an adversarial manner has not been limited to MIRP matters. During Year Two, there was a struggle between two labor organizations that wished to serve as the collective bargaining agent in the district. Many ofthe K-3 MIRP teachers were active on one side of the fight, and according to the principal, saw themselves generally "as reformers and innovators." This labor relations matter, to quote the principal "caused some degree of bitterness," which fed into relations among Consortium Project actors.

One might well conclude that the intra-group cohesiveness and inter-group conflicts (K-3 vs. Title I; 4-6 vs. K-3) were directly caused by the Consortium Project, particularly by the Year One decision about time blocks and Title I, as well as by the program's different applications at higher and lower grade levels. However, without information about organizational dynamics at the school prior to the project's first year, it is impossible to know definitively whether this is, in fact, the case. There are, in any case, both logical and empirical hints to indicate a likely flip-flop of the two potential cause and effect factors.

From a logical standpoint, it does not necessarily follow that resentment will develop among groups of teachers using a program differently at different grade levels (although it does stand to reason that Title I staff members might feel put down and threatened by a program that deprives them of their clients). From the empirical evidence, there is some indication that adversarial advocacy by one group (particularly the K-3 group) against another was not a rare occurrence at Bridgetown School, apart from the Consortium Project's own life. As the linking agent stated, "People had a history of infuriating each other and taking a very hard line;" one may add the principal's statement that the Title I issue continued "an old problem" (i.e., resentment of outside specialists' interruptions in the regular classroom routine). And the active involvement of MIRP enthusiasts in the bargaining agent fight during Year Two is further evidence that at least some project actors had a tendency to do battle over matters they thought important.

Although based on the evidence at hand, one cannot definitively answer the question of cause and effect, it is plausible to view the Consortium Project as an arena into which pre-existing dynamics of inter-group conflict

and group advocacy emerged and were played out. Project decisions, particularly the Title I decision, fueled the fire; but the most controversial decisions and site actors' behavior were initiated by the actors themselves, primarily by those in the K-3 wing.

In this view although a product was used to varying extent, the dominant and prevailing problem solving process used in the Bridgetown Elementary School during the period of the Consortium Project was not one reflecting a linear, rational decision making model. Rather, it was a continuation of pre-existing conflicts over turf and inter-group dominance.

In this view, an R&D reading product was selected and was used in the school to varying degrees; however, the dominant and prevailing problem-solving process used in Bridgetown Elementary School during the period of the Consortium Project was not one reflecting a linear, rational decision making model. Rather, it was a continuation of pre-existing patterns, traditions and conditions, including conflicts over turf, intra-group cohesion and inter-group misunderstanding and conflict.

APPENDIX

Data Sources

Data upon which this epilogue is based come from two sources: 1) interviews (conducted in late April and in May 1979) with the linking agent and with teachers and administrators at the school site; and 2) documentary sources produced during the project's three-year life. Interviews were taped, unless such procedure was not approved by a given respondent. Below is a list of interview respondents, by role, followed by a list of the documents used.

Respondents (n=13)

MIRP teachers:

- First grade, original DMG member
- Second grade, original DMG member
- Bilingual teacher (K-3)
- Second grade, new to program in Year Three
- First grade, new to program in Year Three
- Title I teacher, formerly first-grade and member of DMG
- Fourth grade, new to program in Year Three
- Fifth grade, new to program in Year Three

Administrators:

- Principal
- K-3 assistant principal
- 4-6 assistant principal
- K-8 reading coordinator (district-wide)

Linking Agent

Documents

Project Case Study (November, 1977 to June, 1978) by Elliott Krause

"A Problem Identification Site Report" (n.d.)

"A Local Site Report on Implementating Planning" (n.d.)

"Site Report on Implementation"

Program descriptive materials produced by the developer.

File on Year One meetings and decision-making steps, furnished by the K-3 assistant principal.

HASTINGS ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

CASE STUDY BY: Alfred Wilson
Kansas State University
Manhattan, Kansas

Mary Ladd Smith
331 Conant Road
Weston, Massachusetts

EPILOGUE TO
CASE STUDY BY: Martha Stone Wiske
Harvard Graduate School of Education
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Case Study of Hastings Elementary School

I. THE SITE

The Community

Hastings, in the heart of the plains in Midwest State, is a small rural community with a total population of about 300 people. It is governed by a mayor and a city council. The main occupation in the town is farming and the median income is about $12,000. The inhabitants are widely dispersed with approximately one family every two square miles. There are no apartment buildings in Hastings, only houses and farms scattered over the vast plains.

The population is predominantly white (only one Mexican American is enrolled in the schools). Occupational and even physical mobility in a small, rural community of this kind is limited. Due to peer pressure, families tend to be more stable. It is not unusual for a person to be reared in a small town in this state and to stay and rear his or her own children in the same environment. While there are many older (60-70 years old) residents in Hastings, a number of young people are coming back to live in the town.

Due to the limited number of recreational opportunities in most rural towns, school activities hold a great deal of interest. Thus the schools have a much larger power base than many larger suburban school systems. In such communities, townspeople are more likely to be aware of new programs in the schools and to discuss what they see happening at greater length.

The Local Schools

The elementary school in Hastings has an enrollment of 80 children, K-8. There are eight teachers in eight classrooms: one kindergarten teacher, two teachers who cover first-third grades, two for fourth-sixth and three for the seventh and eighth grades. The elementary school has no guidance counselor. Fifty percent of the town's students live in outlying farms and are bused to school on routes which involve a stop every 3 1/2 to 4 miles.

In this school district, which is the seventh smallest in the state, the superintendent also serves as principal of the elementary school and his office is located in the same building. There is a high school principal with

responsibility for grades 9-12 who is also the Title I coordinator for grades 7-12.

In 1975 a comprehensive needs assessment was carried out in Hastings by the high school principal in order to meet the requirements for a course on evaluation which he was taking at the local state college. With the support of the superintendent he had collected data on staff, parent and community opinions of improvements needed in the school system using a major modified Delphi needs assessment survey.

As a result of this assessment, the school authorities determined that the two areas of greatest concern were reading and mathematics. The superintendent reviewed achievement scores in math and reading and decided that the results indicated that the students having difficulty with reading were those who entered after first grade.

An administrative assessment found that the reading program presently in use was adequate for "home-grown students." (Telephone interview with William McHenry, superintendent/elementary principal, May 23, 1978.) The mathematics program, however, was perceived to be falling below the public's expectations in the area of computational skills. The Hastings school district subsequently worked with the linking agent in Urban City (which later became a Consortium Project subcontractor) in implementing Project Bright, an individualized math program, in 1975.

As a result of successfully adopting Project Bright, Hastings received a great deal of local attention. Visitors came to observe the program from several larger systems and the upper elementary math teacher became a state trainer for the program. The school administrators were pleased with both the attention and Project Bright.

II. CONSORTIUM INVOLVEMENT

In the summer of 1976, the linking agent, Jack Carter, approached Superintendent McHenry about the possibility of joining the Consortium. Because Hastings had already been involved with the Linking Agency in a successful program, the superintendent was willing to risk losing some local control to the Linking Agency by saying he would be a part of the Consortium if it were funded. (Since the school population was so small, the superintendent believed it would be almost impossible to receive federal funding for program development and that the adoption of validated programs, through the Linking Agency, was the best and easiest option available to them.) In addition, the 1975

needs assessment had identified reading as an area for improvement.

On August 11 and 12, 1976 the state-wide Joining Up Conference was held. Staff from three other Midwest State schools in the Consortium attended along with the Hastings superintendent, and two staff members chosen by the superintendent for their influence and popularity in the community. (Hastings thus sent its entire elementary school administration and one-fourth of the teaching staff.)

The Joining Up Conference began at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday, August 11, 1976 with "Pictures and Related Information." This was a thirty-minute period to get acquainted. The participants were asked to complete a form giving some information about themselves and their attitudes toward change. Each participant then had a Polaroid snapshot taken of himself/herself which was pasted onto the information form. The forms with the snapshots were posted around the room. At 2:05 p.m. the Linking Agency staff members introduced themselves. At 2:20 p.m. the participants engaged in another activity which was designed to promote better understanding among the persons in attendance. (Note: One must realize that Hastings, one of the smallest districts in the state, was receiving the same attention as larger districts. The student population in Park City, for example, is much more than 5,000 which is small by national standards but which is several times larger than Hastings.)

Each district team produced a single picture on newsprint which best described the school district and then explained the picture. At 3:15 p.m. the director explained the Linking Agency organizational system and Jack Carter, the linking agent, described the Consortium and the NIE Project and their relationship to the Linking Agency. Lenore McNamara, from the agency, explained the ERIC system and how it could be used by clients. An official from the Midwest State Department of Education explained the department's position as related to the Consortium.

The next exercise of the day involved cross-district trios wherein each member could explain his/her views and/or concerns about change processes. The last exercise at 4:30 p.m. dealt with the questions and/or concerns the district teams had about the Consortium and the NIE project. A group dinner was held at 6:00 p.m. Each person present was asked to choose a place card with a prepared statement on it which best paralleled his/her own personal hitory; participants read their cards and explained their choices after dinner. ("Consortium

Joining Up Conference," Report prepared by Lenore McNamara and Jack Carter, August 11, 12, 1976.)

The second day began at 8:30 a.m. with another brief explanation of the project by Jack Carter and a general discussion. Cross-district trios were formed at 10:45 a.m. to discuss two of the four main concerns about change which they had formulated the preceding day. At 11:30 a.m. other Linking Agency staff were introduced. (The number of Linking Agency staff present was almost equal to the entire Hastings Elementary School staff.) The afternoon was spent discussing the Consortium participation in more explicit detail beginning with Jack Carter fully explaining the Galileo interview technique that was to be used in gathering school and community information (but which was dropped by the Consortium Project early in Year One).

At 1:45 p.m. Carter dealt with the establishment and broadly representative makeup of the Decision Making Group and explained the needs assessment that was to take place. The remainder of the afternoon was spent scheduling times for interviews, requesting ERIC searches, and debriefing. ("Consortium Joining Up Conference," Report prepared by Lenore McNamara and Jack Carter, August 11, 12, 1976.) (Note: All of the above listed group process activities were foreign to these people from small schools in the western part of the state although they responded well to them.)

The concerns listed by Hastings participants at this conference were:

1. What money is available for implementing a new reading program?

2. What obligation to the Consortium would the school district have?

3. What grades will be involved? (Note: This is also a way of asking which teachers would be involved as there is less than one teacher for each elementary grade.)

4. Do we look for a program that involves a specialist or do we use existing faculty? (Note: This is an approach some districts used to improve existing staff.)

5. What techniques of instruction will the program have?

III. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

The steps used by the linking agent, Jack Carter, in the intervention strategy from late August 1976 to February 1977 were (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.):

1. Interviews of the staff
2. Presentation to the Hastings Board of Education
3. Needs assessment conducted and analysis of data gathered
4. Development of selection criteria by Carter and Decision Making Group
5. Decision Making Group reviewed a catalog of abstracts of reading programs in the Consortium Reading Pool
6. Decision Making Group narrowed the field of programs down to the six (and later four) which most closely approximated the selection criteria
7. Final program decided upon
8. Training conducted for the implementation of the chosen program.

Staff Interviews

On September 8, 1976 Carter visited the school and interviewed the staff using the Galileo interview technique. Carter was perceived by the Hastings school people as a personable, articulate, relatively young man; he was spoken well of by the people in Hastings who worked with him during this process.

As a result of these interviews Carter found evidence of a split between teachers in the primary and intermediate grades. The primary teachers apparently felt left out because they had not been involved in the math program which had been adopted the previous year. Although the linking agent felt that this split might cause future problems, his fears later proved groundless. He also noticed that "the community does not take an active part in school affairs." (Consortium Contact Report September 8, 1976) (Note: In other local communities, parents and others take a very active role, especially when things start to go wrong.)

According to Carter, a problem developed at step one due to his use of the Galileo interview strategy. This strategy had been developed by two men from the University of North Central State who were operating a company called Exchange-o-Metrics. The data was sent there for analysis but before it was done, the partnership dissolved and the company disbanded. Consequently the strategy had to be dropped and the final research based on this strategy was not used. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

Once the interviews were completed, however, Carter made suggestions for the composition of the Decision Making Group (DMG). The high school principal, who was also the basketball coach, suggested that the Title I council be used, but the superintendent, McHenry, believed that the interests of Title I parents were not sufficiently broad to represent the whole school community on the Decision Making Group. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) Carter suggested that the DMG be made up of nine people and include at least one teacher, one parent, a board member and an administrator in addition to himself. (Note: Ultimately five of the members were also on the Title I council and there were almost as many secondary as elementary school people on the DMG, even though the program was to be implemented on the elementary level.)

Needs Assessment and Problem Definition

At the first meeting in October, the linking agent obtained basic information on problems in the Hastings system through anecdotal accounts supplied by teachers and standardized test scores. Because of the needs assessment done previously by the high school principal, this step was seemingly made easier. Carter also learned that Title I money had just been obtained for the secondary grades.

The teachers and administrators were concerned that any Consortium program dovetail with the secondary program. They also asked that the second meeting be a joint one with the Title I council in order to arrange cooperative efforts. At this point the DMG was perceived by Carter as "wanting to move faster than they are actually ready to move," and being "more product than process oriented." (Consortium Contact Reports October 20; November 15, 1976.) While Carter's approach was to work in a non-directive way to develop open communication and problem solving skills among the group, some of the members tended to want to start looking immediately at Consortium programs and to deny that any serious problems with reading existed in the schools.

At the third meeting, data was presented which indicated that in general the elementary reading scores were at or above national norms. Previously the group had been given evidence that secondary scores were far below national norms and the principal's needs assessment had targeted reading as an area for improvement. Carter questioned the validity of the new data but did not receive a satisfactory response. He saw an unwillingness to admit that problems existed as a major impediment to progress in working with the system. (Consortium Contact Report November 15, 1976.) Because of limited time, Carter was unable to use the Chalk-Talk game (developed by Far West Lab) with the DMG, and instead presented the group with the 40 reading program abstracts, having "decided to go ahead and play their game and see what they come up with on the basis of their selection." (Consortium Contact Report November 15, 1976.)

Carter felt that there was a real problem with the Hastings DMG. A major source of the difficulties appeared to be the presence of the high school principal and high school Title I reading teacher. These two people, according to Carter, dominated the meetings and refused to acknowledge any problems at all in front of the other members of the group.

Following the December 1976 Consortium Project linking agent training session, Carter developed several strategies for dealing with the problem at Hastings. One was to arrive early for the meeting and spend time talking with the superintendent (who wielded most power in the system) about the group. (Contact Report April 29, 1977). McHenry, the superintendent, in discussion suggested removing the two people from the DMG, but Carter believed this was overly harsh treatment. A compromise was reached by having McHenry schedule activities which prevented one of these two persons from coming to the meeting at any given time. (Consortium Contact Report, Jack Carter, December 13, 1976.)

A second strategy was to obtain a telephone amplifier which would enable the group to speak with the resource pool coordinator at the Consortium's central office in New England in order to ask questions about the reading program abstracts which they had been examining. This strategy also involved the DMG with the Consortium as a whole and gave them contact with the outside resources available. A final strategy was for Carter "to operate on a more directive basis" and "demand that problem identification occur before we make a final selection." (Consortium Contact Report December 13, 1976.)

The Problem Statement was developed by Carter using the data collected to answer the questions developed by the

DMG. Each group had taken one or two questions and collected data. The Problem Statement was brought back to the group and revised according to their suggestions. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

The Problem Statement which emerged (prepared by linking agent Jack Carter) was:

1. What Kind of Problem is it?

   One of the major problems of this small, west central school system is that of isolation. The closest community where inservice training and/or college courses exist is 75 miles away.

   For the teachers in the Hastings district to keep current on what is going on in the field of reading instruction is difficult. Even more than the geographical isolation is the feeling of social isolation. Teachers do not feel they have the opportunity to observe new ideas in education in action. This feeling of isolation gives rise to a feeling of inferiority on the part of the staff and administration. Generally, the people in the community suffer from a poor self image.

   Because of these factors, the people from the outside who have had contact with the district (actually not many) have difficulty in being accepted and trusted. (Researcher's Note: This researcher believes that just the opposite was true -- they exhibit a sense of gullibility and hunger to believe what they receive from others.)

   Because the school is small, it has been difficult to build up any quantity of enrichment materials for students to use at the elementary level. Reading of books, newspapers and magazines is not a common activity in this district. Support enrichment materials that are designed by the publishers of the two basic text books in use (Houghton-Mifflin and Economy) are not available as they are considered to be too expensive. I (Carter) would define enrichment materials as also including worksheet or workbook type activities. (Researcher's Note: Was the Linking Agency looked at as the funding agency to do this? One would believe so even though the Linking Agency staff working at the state and national levels see themselves as linkers and not major funders.)

2. Who is Affected?

Students, teachers and community are affected by this problem. The interesting point is, however, that standardized reading test scores are reasonably good at the elementary level. The Title I reading program was developed and has been implemented at the high school level. The above mentioned problem seems to affect the secondary students more than it does the elementary students. (Researcher's Note: With the closeness of the two staffs, however, the Title I reading specialist views herself as the "person knowing reading" and thus the person to control elementary reading as well as secondary.)

3. How are They Affected?

All concerned groups in this small community are isolated. The self image of all parties involved in the district is low. The nearby districts do not provide a sounding board or a chance to exchange ideas. The isolation and size of this district make it nearly impossible to carry on meaningful staff development programs for any teacher area.

4. Who or What is Causing the Problem?

Geographical isolation is much of the cause. Until a person has experienced the vastness of the area, and the time and distance necessary to travel from one place to another, it is difficult to comprehend this problem.

5. Goal for Improvement

Make it possible to look at the most recent and successful reading programs both by examining materials and successful reading programs and through on site visits. Make available, either by bringing on site or transporting the involved members of the staff, competent consultants in the field. Adoption and implementation of a Consortium R&D Resource Pool program that meets enrichment material and staff development needs would do much to solve this problem. (Problem Statement prepared by Jack Carter, Linking Agency.)

The Program Selection Process

The Decision Making Group looked through a catalog of forty

abstracts of reading programs in the Consortium Reading Pool brought to them by Carter. The DMG wanted a program that would not replace the regular reading program basal reader but rather one that would enrich or supplement the present program published by the Economy Company. (Telephone interview with William McHenry, superintendent/elementary principal, May 23, 1978.) They also wanted a program in which every student could participate. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) They also wanted a program that was a good management system. (Telephone interview with Wilma Becker, reading teacher, primary level, June 8, 1978.) The programs were narrowed down to six, four of which were carefully considered. These four were:

Pegasus-Pace -- Basically a reading management system, this program is successfully implemented in two schools in Park City, Midwest State. This is one of the federally-validated Developer/Demonstrator projects from the National Diffusion Network. It is a management system with specific measurable objectives to be achieved. It is used in the first through sixth grades in the Park City Schools. It does not include a preconstructed file of prescriptions to use with each skill level to be taught but provides a management system within which to collect and use prescriptive data.

Andover Individualized Reading System -- This program, developed in Andover, Massachusetts, is an extensive materials and management package. This is a rather expensive adoption and to the linker's knowledge no schools are using the materials outside the Andover, Massachusetts school district itself. (Editor's Note: This was not true after August, 1977.)

Wisconsin Design -- This program contains a variety of components, management systems, and materials. The program included an extensive record keeping and management system which was not considered to be a great need for Hastings because of the small number of teachers.

DID (a pseudonym) -- This program was developed by Research Center in Eastern City. Dr. Jim Hunter was one of the developers of the program. It is a management system, teaching technique, and extensive materials package integrated into one program. This program seems to best meet the needs of the elementary school at Hastings.

(Descriptions were prepared by linker Carter from program abstracts prepared by the Far West Laboratory for

Educational Research and Development and the program developers.)

In addition to the telephone question and answer session, on site visits were provided for Pegasus-Pace at Park City and DID at Frond, Nebraska. Throughout this process Carter noted an "increasing ownership level" on the part of the DMG (March 28, 1977 Consortium Report).

The Decision Making Group was provided a telephone credit card so that they could call locations to receive answers to any questions they might have at a later time. Several calls were made to Donald Krantz, a principal in Park City, to Dr. Jim Hunter of Research Center who was one of the developers of DID, and to Frond, Nebraska. The DMG felt that DID most nearly fit their selection criteria. In March, a formal decision was made to adopt the program.

The training program was held on August 18 and 19, 1977. The entire kindergarten through grade twelve staff was present on August 18. Dr. Jim Hunter from Research Center in Eastern City conducted the training session. On August 19, Dr. Hunter worked with just the elementary staff in teaching the specific methods of using DID. He seemed to have been very well received by everyone he met. Carter described him as "a seasoned trainer... it's a real pleasure to see someone (with) his wit and ability to work with people operate with a staff that has in the past been rather difficult to open up." (Consortium Contact Report August 26, 1977.)

Program Adoption

A long delay in receiving DID materials held up project implementation. Dr. Hunter suggested that the program should not be started until all the materials had arrived. (Consortium Contact Report, Jack Carter, September 2, 1977.) On February 2, 1978, Linking Agency staffers Jack Carter and Lenore McNamara visited Hastings to review materials that had arrived. It was then determined that four items had not yet arrived; they were (1) Language Master Cards, (2) remainder of supplemental books, (3) twenty-six tapes at the intermediate level, and (4) paperback books which went with some of the tapes at the intermediate level. The delay was caused by the fact that some of the materials were out of stock or no longer in print. In addition, the materials were ordered through the Urban City school system which only placed large orders or waited for orders to accumulate. The Hastings order was not large enough to warrant rapid treatment. McHenry believed that the materials should have been ordered through the Hastings system and the funds sent directly to Hastings to pay for the materials.

On Thursday, March 16, 1978, and Friday, March 17, 1978, the Client Capacity Building Conference was held at the Holiday Inn East in Urban city, Midwest State. The Consortium schools represented were Hastings, Maxfield Parton, Alison Gray (in Park City), and Valley City. Those persons in attendance from Hastings were William McHenry (superintendent/elementary principal), the fourth-sixth grade reading teacher, and the K-third grade reading teacher. This meeting gave the representatives from each school an opportunity to interact with each other and also to renew enthusiasm for the programs. (Note: This would appear to have been a most worthwhile goal for Hastings at that time.) The first day, March 16, was largely spent discussing each school's entry into the Consortium and their position along their timelines up to the present time. The Consortium staff members who participated in the conference were Jack Carter (Consortium Project/Linking Agency linking agent), Lenora McNamara and another facilitator from the Linking Agency, the Consortium central linker support specialist and Dr. Jim Penny, a Wichita State University Professor, who was originally contracted to write this case study. The second day, March 17, dealt primarily with the future of each project and with training in problem solving.

The Hastings conference participants established a future time line at the Client Capacity Building Conference. It was:

April, 1978.	Going to retrain with Nebraska instructors
May, 1978	Teacher's hands-on trial
June, 1978.	Preparing a student folder for each student
August, 1978.	Teachers familiarize themselves with materials
September, 1978	Skills placement testing of students
November, December 1978	Program review and evaluation of the program
January, 1979	Publish results of program, review in school paper

The goals of the Client Capacity Building Conference were to:

1. Create an understanding of the national picture of the Consortium and the role of the participating Midwest State school districts within it.

2. Create an understanding of and desire to utilize the resources available to the participating districts, both within and outside the Consortium group.

3. Further the understanding of the relationship between the Consortium Central, Linking Agency, and the participating school districts.

4. Provide an opportunity for the staff and the participating districts to interact with one another on common concerns.

5. Provide an opportunity for the staff and the participating districts to interact in order to form the basis of a "community" working/sharing relationship.

6. Reacquaint the participants with one particular element of the change process, Barriers to Change, as it will relate to their implementation and maintenance procedures.

7. Provide an opportunity to share past to present timelines and to formulate future timelines.

8. Establish the institutionalization of the model for the adoption process that is used by the Consortium.

9. Create an understanding of evaluation procedures.

Strengths and Weaknesses

The major strengths of the Consortium problem solving process appear to be different to different people. McHenry, the superintendent, thought the major strength and the most important success thus far was the selection and make-up of the Decision Making Group. He said he chose people to be on the DMG who were most skilled in reading, who had not been involved in the council for Project Bright (except for two persons who were skilled in project implementation, especially public relations), community people who were strong supporters and would "pass the good news about the selection," and people who were

knowledgeable, such as teachers, to provide a control. He also had selected someone who was opposed to these kinds of programs so the "opposition had a voice." (Telephone interview with William McHenry, superintendent/ elementary principal, May 23, 1978.)

The treasurer of the school district, who also worked in the superintendent's office, said that while she thought the kids would benefit from the program, the only kids who really needed it were the transient kids (Note: Transients are sometimes defined by Midwest State people as those not living in the community for more than 50 years.), and she wished her son who was in high school could "get to use all that equipment and stuff." The Title I reading teacher believed that the elementary kids were doing all right with the regular reading program.

A woman who worked part-time as secretary to the superintendent and part-time as a learning disabilities aide, commented about DID, "Everyone would sure like to get started." She also remarked that the teachers were going to forget their training if they didn't start soon and that Hunter should come out again and re-train the teachers. The school cook, who was a member of the Decision Making Group and helped to make the decision to use DID, believed this was the best program because "they were going to use tape recorders just like they did with the math program." (Jim Penny's field notes.)

The high school principal said the best thing about the process was that it was "bringing the staff together, reviewing the needs of reading in the district, and bringing the community in." (Telephone interview with the principal, June 8, 1978.) The primary reading teacher said, "I have a positive attitude. So many students are held back and in this DID Program they can go ahead and feel they can accomplish something." (Telephone interview with the teacher, June 8, 1978.) Jack Carter of the Linking Agency thought that the most important thing was the work with the multiconstituency Decision Making Group. They complemented the superintendent who was perceived as being competent and strong and usually made the bulk of district decisions. Another strength of Hastings' staff was the ability to recognize and admit their weakness in the system due to the isolation. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, June 9, 1978.)

The biggest problem appeared to have been the difficulty in obtaining the materials which in turn delayed implementation of the program for a whole year.

Time and Costs

The implementation steps outlined earlier involved two meetings per month for approximately a full year. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) According to the budget sheets attached, the estimated cost of the program was $9890. The breakdown was Consortium costs of $5125, Linking Agency costs of $2420, and site costs of $2345. It appears that members of the Decision Making Group worked on project implementation on their own time outside of school hours. The exception to this voluntarism were inservice days for which the staff was paid $25 per day.

The following chart shows the estimated number of days that Agency Staff were involved in implementation (Linking Agency Implementation Plan -- Hastings, Midwest State):

ESTIMATED LEVEL OF EFFORT IN NUMBER OF PERSON DAYS

	All (4) Consortium Schools in the State	Hastings
1. Site Selected	8	2
2. Decision Making Group (DMG) Selected	8	2
3. DMG completes Problem Identification and Needs Assessment	45	12
4. DMG established R&D Selection	6	2
5. DMG selects Reading Program	12	4
6. DMG projects installation problems, needs	6	2
7. DMG completes Installation Plan (including process, actors, responsibilities, asessment design, and schedule	12	4

The chart at the end of this report shows the events which were considered milestones. Milestones nine through thirteen had not been reached in June of 1978. Trial adoption of Project DID in Hastings was ultimately set for August, 1978 rather than August, 1977. The problems involved in obtaining materials caused a full year's delay in the beginning of the program.

Evaluation Procedures

The evaluation procedures seemed uncertain and even undeveloped. Hastings was relying on Jim Hunter, the trainer, for evaluation suggestions. There was some vague suggestion that the Hastings teachers establish a goal of improving standardized test scores in reading. Carter indicated that he felt a need for some definitive evaluation plan but had not yet determined how to get it. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

Future of the Program

The adoption of Project DID appeared ready to go in the fall of 1978. McHenry and Carter had optimistic expectations. A training session was scheduled before school began with an ex-administrator from Frond, Nebraska, who was instrumental in implementing DID there. This man is now an administrator in the State. (Telephone interview with high school principal, June 9, 1978.)

IV. CONCLUSION

The Hastings adoption provides an interesting example of the way in which careful planning and realistic timelines for implementation can be thrown away. Problems with materials delivery, books out of print and Urban City ordering policies served to delay implementation for a painfully long period. Such a delay can frequently be demoralizing and jeopardize any innovative program. What is interesting about Hastings is that in spite of a whole year's wait for materials, enthusiasm and interest remained high. (Consortium Contact Report, February 20, 1978.)

Once the second round of training was completed, the program was fully installed in 1978-79. Asked how he would rate the quality of this adoption compared to others in the state at the end of its first year, Carter candidly described it as an adoption that was "a little above average." (Interview May 14, 1979.)

Another interesting aspect of the Hastings adoption is the linking agent learning that took place. Despite a fairly clearcut, mandated procedure, when Carter, the linking agent, began to recognize the signs of trouble with the DMG, he was able to modify his approach, to become somewhat more directive, more product oriented and not insist on using the process-oriented approach which he favored. In addition he was able to ask for and obtain

help and strategies from the central staff of the Consortium Project at the linker training meetings.

Consultations during the linking agent training sessions helped him elucidate and define the problems. Conferences with experienced staff gave rise to changes in strategy. Using the telephone conference call to Susan Webber helped disseminate information on the programs rapidly and answer questions while at the same time it rather dramatically involved this small, isolated school in the Consortium. Carter also arrived a half hour early on subsequent contacts to have time to chat with key people prior to scheduled meetings. (Consortium Contact Reports February 13, 1976; February 28, 1977.)

The study also illustrates the impact of a national dissemination program on a small isolated rural school system. Through personal contact on the part of the linkers and trainers, the usual mistrust of outsiders seems to have been dispelled, and a new program was installed. In part, a history of positive experience with the Linking Agency appears to have been responsible for the openness to change. In part, the lure of government money and contact with other school professionals may have been a motivating force. In addition, the fact that the Decision Making Group was actively involved in the selection process and gradually took ownership of the program seems to have been another key variable. According to the Linking Agency director in a December 6, 1977 interview with researcher Jim Penny, "Hastings still doesn't have that damn DID stuff for the job and they want to wait until next year and get a fresh start -- with fresh training -- most school districts would probably give it up and tell the linker to go to hell -- but Hastings wants to start over next year." (Jim Penny's field notes, January 30, 1978.) If the linkers have still got a chance, they must have great rapport!

V. SUMMARY

The story thus far of Hastings' involvement in the Consortium Project is of straightforward progress and a seemingly endless delay in implementing a reading program. There appears to have been a clear-cut intervention strategy employed by the linking agent, Jack Carter, with appropriate modifications at key junctures.

A functioning Decision Making Group was set up which took responsibility for program selection. Representatives from Hastings attended several statewide meetings which appeared to be very helpful for all the districts -- especially Hastings. Given the fact that the Hastings Problem

Statement concerned itself mainly with the isolation of the school district, these types of meetings seem especially valuable to the faculty and administration at Hastings.

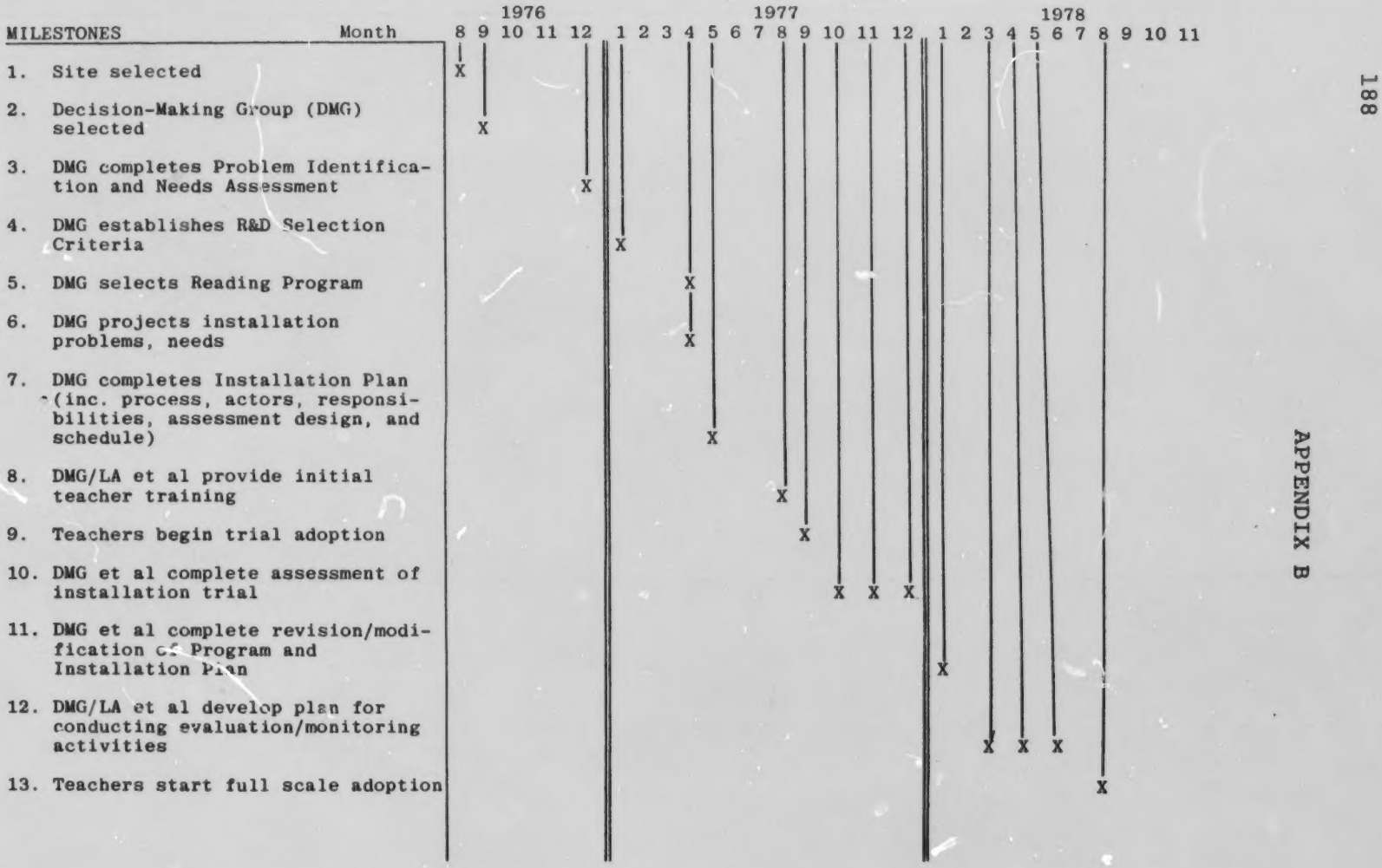
A training session was held and some materials arrived. Site visitations from the linking agent continued throughout the second year, but no significant behavioral implementation on the student level took place. Significant activity had taken place, money had been spent, but there had been no impact on students at the end of the second year. The beginning date for implementation was rescheduled for August 1978.

IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET WORKSHEET

ITEM	DESCRIPTION OF JUSTIFICATION	SOURCE OF SUPPORT SITE	LINKING AGENCY	CONSORTIUM	OTHER	TOTAL
I. PERSONNEL						
Administration						
Teachers						
Linking Agent			1,488			
Substitutes		100				
Other_____						
_____						
II. CONSULTANTS						
Program		250				
Evaluation		200				
Other		300				
III. MATERIAL AND SUPPLIES						
Training						
Implementation			4,700			
Evaluation		100				
IV. REPRODUCTION						
Training		100				
Implementation		100				
Evaluation						
V. TRAVEL						
Training			425			
Site visits by Linking Agent			932			
Site visits by Consultants	2 consultants	345				
	1 consultant -- Frond, Neb.	250				
VI. MISCELLANEOUS	Staying Together	600				

APPENDIX A

IMPLEMENTATION TIMELINE AS RELATED TO CONSORTIUM MILESTONES


1976
1977
1978
8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11
MILESTONES
Month
1. Site selected
2. Decision-Making Group (DMG) selected
3. DMG completes Problem Identification and Needs Assessment
4. DMG establishes R&D Selection Criteria
5. DMG selects Reading Program
6. DMG projects installation problems, needs
7. DMG completes Installation Plan (inc. process, actors, responsibilities, assessment design, and schedule)
8. DMG/LA et al provide initial teacher training
9. Teachers begin trial adoption
10. DMG et al complete assessment of installation trial
11. DMG et al complete revision/modification of Program and Installation Plan
12. DMG/LA et al develop plan for conducting evaluation/monitoring activities
13. Teachers start full scale adoption

Appendix C

GOALS OF THE JOINING UP CONFERENCE

1. Create an understanding of the Consortium and its role and function as to participating school districts.

2. Create an understanding of the resources available to participating districts.

3. Create an understanding of the relationship between the Consortium and the Linking Agency's various components.

4. Provide an opportunity for the staff and the participating districts to interact with one another on common concerns.

5. Acquaint the participants with some of the elements of the change process as it will relate to their participation.

6. Familiarize the participating districts with the ideal time line of activities relatd to the Consortium.

7. Establish initial appointments in each of the participating school districts.

8. Create an understanding of the model for the adoption process that will be used by the Consortium.

Appendix D

NUEVA DAY SCHOOL QUESTIONNAIRES

Newsprint Sheets from Client Capacity Building Conference
March, 1978

*Maxfield Parton	Enthusiasm for the program
	Student on reading level
	Testing and evaluation on schedule
*Park City	Grouping by needs
	Whole school working 25 minutes on RIP at the same time
	Using the entire staff
*Hastings	Good P.R. and community involvement. Positive movement toward adoption.
*Valley City	Considering the opinion of everyone involved -- "Harmonious" is the key word. Other than this, nothing.

2. What are you doing now that you want to do more of?

Maxfield Parton	Recording testing data
	Keep out files going
	Better use aides (teacher)
Park City	Faster regrouping
	Changing levels

*These were the four schools in Midwest State participating in the Consortium Project.

	P.R. job for parents and community
	Reading Improvement Program faculty meeting
	Accumulating file materials
	Grade level overlap
Hastings	Additional or continued P.R.
Valley City	We are unique! We have no program now. We need a program.

3. What are you doing that you want to stop doing?

Maxfield Parton	Building a central file
	Sharing information between buildings as a group
	Dating
Park City	Using skewers on cards
	School-wide record sheet
	Putting information in permanent records
	Add games to files
	Space for extra work sheets and labeled
	Supply area needs moved
	Get clerical help
	Sending notes home as each skill test is passed
Hastings	Realizes relative unimportance of our size
Valley City	We need to talk with other districts TODAY! Involve faculty.

4. What are you not doing now that you do not want to start doing?

Maxfield Parton	Saying "we can't because we haven't time."
	Chewing gum
Park City	Canceling when substitutes come in
	Using principal as grouping person
Hastings	Make orders through Urban City district
Valley City	We need to <u>stop</u> preparing to START!

Appendix E

LIST OF MOST SIGNIFICANT PERCEIVED

PROBLEMS FOR HASTINGS IN THE FUTURE

Newsprint Sheet from Client Capacity Building Conference

March, 1978

-- Staff turnover

-- No cooperation from new staff

-- Everyone using a different management system (in district)

-- Loss of funding

-- Lack of clerical help

-- Linker gets sick

-- Loss of files and materials (fire, tornado, theft, etc.)

-- No sign of student achievement

-- Lowering of student achievement

-- After implementation, doesn't meet the needs

-- Community rebels/rejects

-- Staff rejects

-- Administrator drops support

-- No more newsprint available

-- Students reject program

-- Original project closes down

-- Materials not available (out of print)

-- Loss of manuals

-- The Linking Agency and Consortium close down

Epilogue to Hastings Elementary School Case Study

Introduction

Despite the discouraging delays of Year Two of the Consortium Project in the Hastings Elementary School, Year Three was a period of successful implementation of the DID (a pseudonym) reading program in the school. This success story includes tales of perseverance, ingenuity and commitment to innovation on the part of the teachers and linking agents. It also contains many curious revisions, twists and discrepancies in motivation and in objectives. Statements made at the end of Year Three about problems, goals, and reasons for participating in the Consortium Project are frequently different from those reported in the original case study.

This epilogue describes the events of Year Three: in many ways a gratifying curriculum adoption which would have been difficult to predict at the end of Year Two. The epilogue also updates and amplifies information about assumptions, attitudes and motivations of the participants in the Consortium Project. Although the epilogue is primarily descriptive, it contains some conjectures about puzzling events in the Consortium Project.

Environmental Context

No study of Hastings Elementary School can be accurately conveyed without a description of the town geography and community values. A thorough understanding of this context is probably unattainable without driving through the miles of farmland which surround the town and "visiting" with a number of the inhabitants. "Visiting" is the word used in this central midwest state to label the exchange of information and the accomplishment of objectives which on the east coast are identified by the word "meeting." "Visits" ultimately yield the same results as "meetings," but they take a little longer and include more attention to friendly conversation. Going straight to the point seems a bit rude and abrupt in Hastings.

The main street of Hastings is paved, but all the others are made of dirt. There is no restaurant in town and the nearest lunch counter is a fifteen minute drive on the highway, past cropland and roadside pheasants, to a slightly larger town. Hastings' residents are nearly all farmers, many of whose families have lived in town for generations and are, consequently, related to one another. These relationships criss-cross the community in a network of feuds and family ties.

Although some young people leave Hastings to attend college or junior college, this familial network pulls at them. Many marry young and return to raise their families, often building their home on the family farm.

The community is both chauvinistic about itself and intimidated by outside influences. Residents see Hastings as "the only place the sun is shining," a trouble-free oasis in a world of hostility and annoyance. There is no racial strife in Hastings (only one race is represented) and no drug problem. None of the collective bargaining or unionization problems which plague other school systems is evident in Hastings. There are enough services for the population. "We didn't used to have a lot of emphasis on sports or music but now we do have these facilities. And every child has ready access to those services which are available. No waiting in line to climb the rope or wondering if you will ever get a turn."

New is not automatically seen as better. The attitude that "if it was good enough for me it's good enough for my kids" prevails. One life-time resident said, "People are willing to change, but you have to show them it's going to work."

Outside influences are viewed initially with a skeptical eye. After the initial hesitance, however, they may be very warmly received. For instance, the trainer who introduced the Hastings teachers to the DID program was highly praised at the end of his presentation. An interesting revision of these reactions has taken place over the past two years, however. Although the trainer's program is well-liked, his training is disparaged as inadequate and inappropriate. The teachers now perceive that the "trainers were basically useless."

The teachers' reaction to the Consortium Project followed a similar course. At first they doubted its worth. As they participated in the process they became more enthusiastic. But they are quick to declare that they had to rely on assistance to install the new program.

The School Context

The school is the central unifying institution in this community. There are churches, but the Baptists and the Catholics distinguish themselves from each other. In contrast, all the citizenry identify with the school. Sports are an important component in the high school and cheering sports teams is a major form of entertainment in Hastings.

School is a place where children not only get a "quality education" but also have a pleasant time and learn to like living in Hastings. Their parents do not want them to have to work too hard at school nor to be given too much homework.

It is important that nobody be made to feel inadequate. Before this new reading program was implemented individualization of curriculum was not emphasized. Learning to work in a group was seen as more important than competing or striving to surpass your fellows. According to one teacher, it was better to hold the bright students back from their potential pace than to identify or emphasize the lesser achievements of the slow students.

The school context has shifted slowly during the past 6 - 8 years while William McHenry has been superintendent and elementary principal. He came from another midwestern farming town and brought with him new ideas tempered by a keen understanding of the Hastings norms and values. When he arrived the schools were administered in a dictatorial fashion by the school board. Teachers were seldom hired for more than two years and consequently had difficulty developing new visions or the power to effect change. McHenry's arrival coincided with the election of a new block of less conservative school board members. McHenry believes that schools should not just maintain the status quo. They should excite students and motivate them to become productive members of society and to reach their own best potential. With the cooperation of the school board he has orchestrated a number of changes in the system and is always watchful for ways to bring outside resources into Hastings. The community admires him very much, but he is still careful to plan innovations so that he does not "rock the boat."

Despite McHenry's receptivity to change, the school still has a conservative atmosphere. The organizational structure clearly reflects community assumptions and patterns. Both men and women tend to see men as the source of power and decision making authority. Both may complain about the situation -- McHenry that the teachers do not show much initiative and the teachers that McHenry does not take their ideas or requests seriously -- but few are prepared to acknowledge their own contribution to maintaining the pattern let alone to consider how they might change their behavior. With all male administrators and mostly female teachers the elementary school has operated as a hierarchical institution where authority flows in one direction.

The isolation from the outside world and the inbreeding which intensify relationships in the community are exaggerated in the small school. One teacher said that in order to maintain her privacy she kept her communication superficial with colleagues. Relationships between teachers are fraught with divisions caused by unresolved feuds or disagreements about what counts as good teaching. Thus the community is isolated from the outside world and the individuals within it are somewhat isolated from each other. The Consortium Project has inspired some remarkably cooperative efforts among teachers so that old barriers between them have been diminished. These

organizational and communication shifts will be discussed further in the Outcomes section.

The Process

Motivation to participate in the Consortium Project stemmed from several sources. Some of these were described in the earlier case study; others were mentioned for the first time when participants were interviewed for this epilogue.

The decision to participate in the Consortium Project followed closely on the heels of a successful collaboration between the Urban City Linking Agency and the Hastings Elementary School in implementing a new mathematics program. This experience left the community, particularly McHenry, eager to participate in further use of outside resources and to continue working with linker Jack Carter. The past success also gave the Linking Agency added incentive to work with Hastings again. A needs assessment conducted a few years earlier had indicated that both reading and math achievement needed to be improved. After the math program had been implemented, reading seemed the next logical target.

When interviewed for this epilogue McHenry shed new light on his reasons for participating in the Consortium Project. He was interested in the reading project because he enjoyed being exposed to other administrators at the area conferences sponsored by the Linking Agency. He appreciated the opportunity to learn from his peers, to sharpen his own thinking, and to form connections which might further his own career.

McHenry's decision was also based on a complex set of political and personality considerations. He knew that some teachers who had not been able to participate in the math innovation were envious of those who had and he hoped to ease tensions by involving them in another innovation. His selection of individuals for the Decision Making Group (generally called the reading committee in Hastings) was designed to further several of his own agenda as well as to facilitate the Consortium Project. The elementary teachers of reading were logical choices for this group.

However, their involvement was helpful for other reasons, too. One is a Hastings native, very active in the Baptist Church, who "covers the community like a blanket." She is well respected and capable of building support for the program among a large segment of the population. Another reading teacher is also a lifetime resident of Hastings who was generally opposed to change. If she could be won over, she could neutralize resistance in herself and in other potential "foot-draggers." These two teachers had had some sort of a "falling-out" over the new math program and McHenry saw this reading project as an opportunity for them to re-establish collaboration.

McHenry selected other members of the reading committee for similarly complex reasons. One school board member was chosen because he represented an outlying, heavily Catholic district where he was very popular. He was also one of the less conservative members of the board and was perceived as capable of swaying a block of potentially progressive members. The high school principal, Edward Summer, was included because he had a good relationship with the elementary teachers. McHenry also felt that Summer, who commuted an hour to Hastings every day, was not sufficiently involved in his work. He hoped that these added responsibilities would increase Summer's commitment and thereby lighten McHenry's administrative responsibilities.

In selecting parents for the reading committee, McHenry chose those whose children were not achieving well. He reasoned that their children stood to gain the most from an improved reading program and that they would be, therefore, the most likely to support it.

In fact, the operation of the reading committee followed many of the patterns which McHenry had predicted and accomplished many of the goals which had inspired its composition. He had relatively little to do with this group and encouraged Edward Summer to take responsibility for leading the group. The members were able to generate the support of their constituent groups as McHenry had hoped. Their participation together forged alliances and partnerships which did in fact break down old communication barriers. Two teachers who had previously disagreed about teaching strategies developed more respect for one another. The two teachers who had previously had a "falling out" collaborated successfully in a cross-grouping experiment.

McHenry's motivation to participate in the Consortium Project can thus be seen as a two-pronged strategy. He did wish to see a new, exciting reading program installed. He also wanted to further his own career and to improve working relationships in the school system of which he was superintendent.

Members of the Decision Making Group spoke positively of its multiconstituent composition. In this school teachers were usually consulted before curriculum decisions were made. However, neither they nor parents had had such an extensive role in program selection except when the new math program was implemented. One teacher remarked, "participating on the group got us working together and helped us take a little more responsibility for speaking to McHenry about decisions."

Visiting sites where reading programs had been successfully implemented was seen as the most valuable component in the decision making process. Traveling elsewhere in Midwest State and to a neighboring state was an unusual and exciting experience in itself. These excursions built a sense of mo-

mentum and of unity among the travelers. In addition, the observation of a smooth, efficient classroom using the DID method sold the teachers on its value. This was the second program they observed and they came home determined that it should be selected. They did not even want to visit another site, but preferred to commence implementing DID immediately.

The major interruption of the model decision making process was caused by the delay in arrival of the necessary DID materials. A full set of equipment was not obtained until the spring of the second year. At that time the decision was made to postpone implementation until the following school year. The reading committee per se ceased meeting at that time and did not meet as a group again.

The program "came close to dying" in Year Two when the lack of materials prevented implementation. The continued support of the linker was seen as a critical element in its survival along with the commitment of the teachers on the reading committee. Because of their central role in observing and selecting DID, they "owned" the program and were determined that it should be implemented in their classrooms.

During Year Three, the decision making process focused on a second training session and on implementation of the DID program. In August at the beginning of Year Three, Lenore McNamara replaced Jack Carter as the linking agent. She arranged a second training session for the elementary teachers because a full year had elapsed between the first session and the arrival of DID materials. This training was led by the superintendent of another school district in the state where DID had been successfully implemented. Teachers report that this trainer did provide them with suggestions about individualizing instruction for students, but he did not help them with the actual materials. "He couldn't believe that we didn't already know a lot of things. So we just started in organizing ourselves. It was a blind process." At the beginning of Year Three, the high school principal helped the reading teacher for grades 1 - 3 read the manual and begin to use the work books, test materials, and audio tapes which are part of the DID equipment. After four weeks the grades 4 - 6 reading teacher also educated herself about the program and began to use it with her students. The materials are different for the different grades so each teacher's task was unique. However, they did share ideas and work together on this implementation.

Around the beginning of the second term the kindergarten teacher asked if her two most advanced readers might join the first grade when they were using DID. This cross-grouping experiment had never been attempted before and was extremely successful. The kindergarten students were so enthralled by the program that the kindergarten teacher perused the DID materials and began to use those which were appropriate for her students.

The participants also perceived, however, that the process was not all it was "cracked up" to be be. After a two-year elaborate sequence of steps, they still implemented the program by "hunt and peck."

Finally, the problem solving model appears to have floundered after the steps which deal with implementation. No evaluation plan has been designed. The linker has not trained anyone at the site to monitor the implementation. The site participants do not evidence the desire or the ability to use the model process in solving future problems.

The Role of the Linking Agent

The two linking agents who assisted Hastings worked closely together throughout the three years. For the first two years Jack Carter was the linker and Lenore McNamara was his assistant. In August at the beginning of Year Three, McNamara became the Hastings linker because Carter was promoted to an administrative position in the linking Agency. As director of the agency he continued to oversee her work. They both believed that the linker's involvement at the site should begin to decrease steadily from midway through the intervention period and that during the second half of the intervention the linker's energy should be directed toward helping the school staff become more self sufficient.

Teachers and administrators perceived the linkers as generally valuable (and one teacher saw them as necessary) to the success of the adoption. During the first year, the linker was more important as the leader of the problem solving process and as a means of access to outside resources. During the second year, the linker became the target of the frustrations which resulted when the delivery of DID materials was delayed nearly a year. The linker attempted to speed delivery of materials but was unsuccessful. He absorbed some of the ensuing anger (more was directed at the district ordering office) and thereby protected the local administrators and program developers. The reputations of these latter individuals were still solid when the materials finally did arrive. Consequently, implementation was not hampered by old antagonisms and could, therefore, proceed very quickly.

During Year Three Lenore McNamara communicated with the superintendent/elementary principal approximately twice a month. One contact was by telephone and about once every month (less frequently toward the end of the year) she visited the Hastings School in person. Her primary role this year was to arrange the training session for the teachers and to invite their participation in a state-wide conference which she organized. She also made arrangements for some of the teachers to attend a training session in Mid-Atlantic state. Although they did make the trip, they were so unaccustomed to being in a big city

out of their region that they returned home after one night in Eastern City.

Besides linking the Hastings staff to outside resources and bringing the resources to Hastings, McNamara played an important role in linking the staff with one another. Both the principal and teachers agree that their communication with each other is not as complete or effective as it might be. Teachers think that the principal does not respond to their concerns or take them seriously. The principal in turn believes that the teachers do not take a sufficiently active role in defining or trying to solve their problems. McNamara is respected by all concerned as being knowledgeable, friendly, cognizant of their needs and respectful of their concerns. She also seemed to escape some of the local sex-role expectations, perhaps because she is an outsider. She listens to teachers' complaints and conveys them to the principal. The teachers believe that she has more success in getting the principal to heed these complaints than they would if they tried to deal with him directly. They see him as more attentive to system-wide problems as superintendent than he is to building level concerns as elementary principal.

One example of a teacher request concerned a special table with electrical outlets which could be used to store the cassette recorders. The teacher was worried that the recorders would be broken if they were continually transported around the room. The principal believed that the table was requested simply because the innovative math program, implemented two years before the reading program, had necessitated the use of such a table. He thought the table was a symbol rather than a real need. McNamara saw this as one valid use of her services, albeit not the most important one. The teachers and the principal mentioned that this alternative communication channel function of the linker was in fact very important and useful to them. The principal said, "She creates a communication line that the teachers wouldn't use and I might not hear them if they did."

Whether the linker's creation and use of the line has paved the way for the site personnel to communicate directly in new ways is not yet clear. The linker will remain under contract to Hastings after this year because she is involved in other interventions. As long as she continues to serve effectively as a message carrier, she will be used this way. Transferring this process to the principal actors would require a significant change in attitudes and skills and, perhaps, in basic community expectations about sex roles and authority patterns.

The Product

The DID program includes methods and materials to provide individualized reading instruction for grades 1 - 6. The program emphasizes student directed activities. Students select their own materials and conduct their work with a minimum of teacher direction.

The Hastings teachers had been satisfied with the basic reading program but felt it needed some enrichment. Teachers did not have many interesting materials or activities for those children who had learned basic skills. They wanted a program which would build the students' enthusiasm for reading. Two teachers also wanted a program which would help them tailor instruction to the needs of individual children. Although the classes in the Hastings School are small, competition is not encouraged and opportunities to excel or to seek challenges are rare for students. Because children from grades 1 - 3 and 4 - 6 are included in the same classroom, some grouping did take place. However, many children were held back from learning as fast as they were able.

During Year Three the reading teachers of the 1 - 3 and 4 - 6 classroom used DID test and skill booklets, audio-cassette recordings, and storybooks. The kindergarten teacher did not use the cassette recordings. In the first grade the DID program is used 20 minutes each day. In grades 2 - 6 it is used for one hour 3 - 5 days a week. During these periods children may do a variety of activities, each working individually or in small groups. They may be taking a test to measure skill levels, reading a selection from a group of books appropriate to their ability, or listening to recorded cassette tapes.

The kindergarten teacher uses some of the DID materials "unofficially." She was not involved in the training session. However, she did participate in the reading group and became even more interested in the DID program after her two advanced students showed so much enthusiasm about working with the first grade on DID. She has used some of the DID materials to teach readiness skills to her students.

All the teachers reported that the students enjoyed the opportunity to work independently. Initially students had to learn that it did no good to cheat on self-administered tests and that they could not rely on as much attention from the teacher as they received when the whole group worked simultaneously. But once these habits were acquired they appreciated being able to choose their own books and to work at their own pace. Aside from these beginning hurdles and some continuing concerns about possibly breaking the cassette recorders, teachers voiced no negative reactions to the program.

Teachers did not report any spreading to other subjects of the individualized instruction which they now provide in reading. Apparently the programmed materials and extra equipment included in the DID program are necessary components in the individualized curriculum. Teaching strategies and student skill in being self-directed are not enough to alter the old patterns of teaching subjects other than reading. The DID methods have not affected other teachers in the building who are not using the program directly.

Outcomes

Teachers were generally very satisfied and enthusiastic about the extent to which DID had met their objective of supplying enrichment to the reading curriculum. One of them had been less than sanguine about the possibility (perhaps even the advisability) of individualizing instruction. Yet she joined the other two in praising the efficiency of this aspect of the program. They all believed that children were very happy with the program, with the opportunity to choose their own materials and to work independently at their own pace. Some children who were excelling served as an inspiration to the other students rather than as underminers of the self-confidence of the slower students as some had feared. Teachers perceived that students were choosing to read more for recreation than they had prior to this year. Students have made more frequent use of library materials. So far there have been no pre- and post-test achievement scores or other objective data which could provide a more formal basis for evaluating the effects of the DID program on student skills and attitudes.

The principal also spoke favorably about the effects of the program on students. He said "I really like to see kids excited, motivated to catch up or stay ahead, striving forward. With this program kids feel that they are being provided for and that makes them feel more positive about school."

Implementation of DID has had a significant impact on the teaching methods of the three teachers who use the new program for reading instruction. They now group their children according to skill in a more complex way than they did previously. Prior to this year two teachers had attempted to individualize to some extent, but the other had not. Now all three feel confident and pleased with their ability to modify programs for individual children. Because of the delays in receiving materials and the need to train themselves to use materials, teachers had to work more closely together than they had previously. This increased contact as well as a shared style and philosophy of teaching has helped teachers feel more respectful and cooperative with one another.

The principal believes that the program has "produced a closer working relationship in the whole school." He believes that students and at least those teachers involved in DID feel more excited about being at school. He mentioned that the teachers felt more professional because they were able to train themselves to implement the program. He believes that an outside trainer will have to be brought in periodically as a catalyst for renewed commitment from teachers.

The DID teachers and linker did not corroborate the principal's impression that relationships in the whole school were closer. They believe that the three DID teachers collaborate more succesfully but doubt that communication among other staff has altered. As described earlier they believe that the linker has created a second channel of communication between teachers and principal and that this channel is useful in solving problems. But the teachers do not sound hopeful that they will be able to solve problems with the principal effectively without the linker.

Reaction from the community about the program has been muted but positive. Parents do not meet regularly with teachers at school although they see them outside of school because the community is small. Parents do not have strong reactions to the program but seem to accept it. Members of the reading committee stressed that presenting DID as enrichment rather than replacement of the old reading program has facilitated community acceptance. They felt certain that parents would have been suspicious and resistant to a new program. Parents more readily accepted a program which purported to supplement rather than replace the old curriculum, the school board also favors the program, albeit in a rather passive way. The one school board member who participated in the reading group said he thought it was a good program but did not know very much about it and would refer to the teachers' reports.

Summary

The Hastings story is a success in many respects, but it is also a puzzle. Both the curriculum innovation and the problem solving process of the Consortium Project fell short of their intended outcomes but accomplished some valuable unexpected objectives. The reading program is most successful as a means of individualizing reading instruction. This goal was not mentioned in the original problem statement but is now perceived as important. The problem solving process has been most successful as a means of reducing the isolation of the Hastings staff from each other and from the outside world. It has not apparently been successful in what some (but not all Consortium participants) saw as its intended objective of building the participants' capacity to solve future problems in an orderly, logical manner.

The role of the linker appears to have been crucial in stimulating and maintaining momentum in the innovations which have taken place in Hastings. The linker supplied funds and materials which the school wanted and could not otherwise obtain. The linker provided occasions for the Hastings staff to travel outside their community and to experiment with behaviors outside their usual repertoire. And finally, the linker brought in outsiders who appeared to catalyze the local participants' capacity to take on new responsibilities and to demonstrate competence they had not previously shown.

APPENDIX

Data Collection and Methodology

Collection of information for this epilogue was hampered because it took place at the end of the school year and, as a result, the linkers were concerned that the data collection not be an intrusive experience for the school personnel. The linkers' experience in being interviewed by people who are not at all familiar with their region has been that they were frequently misunderstood or erroneously described. They also perceived that the school personnel might be non-communicative or annoyed if the interviews were not conducted carefully. Consequently, the linkers insisted that the school personnel not be interviewed until the linkers had been able to explain this history to me and the current linker could accompany me to Hastings. By the time we were able to coordinate our schedules, school had been dismissed for the summer. I did, however, visit the school and interview the grades 1 - 3 reading teacher there. No other teachers or students were in the building.

One week after this visit to Hastings, some of the school personnel attended a state-wide conference, arranged by the linker, in a large city several hundred miles from Hastings. The staff who attended this conference were: the elementary principal/superintendent, the high school principal, the kindergarten teacher, the grades 4 - 6 reading teacher, and a school board member. All these people had been members of the reading group. I interviewed all but the latter (who deferred to the others) individually and I also attended their team meetings at the conference. At these meetings they reviewed their experiences of the past three years.

In addition to interviewing the site personnel, I spoke at length on several occasions with both Jack Carter and Lenore McNamara. Lenore drove with me an hour each way between Hastings and the nearest town with a motel. During these rides we had ample time to discuss her impressions of the Hastings experience. Observing her interactions with the Hastings staff also gave me insights into her relationship with them and their patterns of behavior with a familiar outsider. These observations provided a standard with which to compare my own experiences with the staff. I believe that, despite the linkers' concerns, both they and the Hastings staff were extremely cooperative, friendly, and forthright.

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Case Study of Alison Gray Elementary School

I. THE SITE

The Alison Gray Elementary School is located in Park City in the western part of Midwest State, at some distance from the urban centers. Although the region is quite dry, the use of modern irrigation methods has enabled the city to develop economically and grow rapidly. It is thus in the process of becoming a small urban center for the area.

The population of Park City is approximately 20,000. Roughly 15% might be described as upper middle class, 30% middle class, 30% blue collar workers, and 25% semi-skilled or unskilled laborers. The median income is about $14,500, and the economic mainstay of the community is farming. Almost a third of the population is Mexican-American or Chicano, most of whom earn their livelihood as farm laborers.

The school district is comprised of 12 elementary schools, 2 junior high schools, and one high school. The student population is about 4,700. There has been a recent increase of 130% in the number of Mexican-American or Chicano Students, who now represent 40% of the total.

Alison Gray Elementary School serves 383 students and employs sixteen teachers. The teacher student ratio is 1:24. None of the sixteen teachers has tenure, and all have taught in the district less than three years. The school has its own principal, but no guidance counselor.

II. INVOLVEMENT IN THE CONSORTIUM PROJECT

Prior to the state-wide Joining-up Conference sponsored by the Linking Agency in August, 1976, the administration in the district had made a commitment to the Consortium, and the Alison Gray School was seen as the most likely candidate for involvement. Although the Linking Agency had worked with several other schools in the city system, there had been no direct involvement with the Alison Gray School. (Personal interview with linking agent Jack Carter, May 1979.)

The district's curriculum director, Bob Starrs, had worked with the Linking Agency on various adoptions in the past, and was generally viewed as a dynamic, forceful, and

well-liked change agent/leader in the district (Matthew Miles, Case Study C., NIE Contract No. 400-77-0051-0052.) He actively encouraged Martin Wiggins, principal of the Alison Gray School, to get involved with the Consortium. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

Wiggins' recollection of his early involvement with the Consortium was of his introduction to the Linking Agency by the curriculum director, Bob Starrs. At the Joining-up Conference he learned that he could get help in establishing a reading program. He recalled that the individual interview at the meeting was a great help to him. Carter had presented the program in such a way as to decrease his anxiety. After the conference, he remembered returning to Park City, meeting with the faculty, and getting their approval to implement the reading program by working with the Consortium. (Telephone interview with Martin Wiggins, May 23, 1978.)

Contact Reports written by linking agent Carter indicate that several teachers accompanied the principal to the Joining-up Conference and that the same individuals later became part of the Decision Making Group.

Wiggins, the principal, admitted in an interview that the real impetus for adopting a change program came from Bob Starrs, the curriculum director. Wiggins felt that the decision to adopt a reading program was not necessarily the school's decision; rather, it was a belief that something needed to be done about investigating, and possibly adopting, an innovative or exemplary program. He felt compelled to adopt a program just for the sake of an adoption. (Jim Penny's field notes, January 12, 1977.) Jim Penny was the researcher originally hired to conduct the field work and write the case studies for the two schools in the midwest.)

The first meeting between the Linking Agency and Alison Gray School personnel was at the Joining-up Conference on August 11 and 12, 1976, in Urban City. The Alison Gray representatives attended, along with representatives from the four other schools involved in the state's Consortium Project. Those persons in attendance from Alison Gray were Bob Starrs (curriculum director for the Park City school system), Martin Wiggins (principal), two teachers, and one member of the Board of Education. The workshop was designed to explain the Consortium to the representatives from the public school systems and to develop enthusiasm for continuing involvement. The goals of the conference were to:

1. Create an understanding of the Consortium and its

role and function in the participating school districts.

2. Create an understanding of the relationship between the Consortium, the Linking Agent, and "Project Assist" (one part of the Linking Agency).

3. Provide an opportunity for the staff and participating districts to discuss common concerns.

4. Provide an opportunity for the Linking Ageny staff and the participating districts to interact and form the basis for a working relationship in the future.

5. Acquaint the participants with some of the elements of the change process as it relates to their participating district.

6. Familiarize the participating districts with an ideal timeline of activities proposed by the Consortium.

7. Establish initial appointments for visits to each of the participating school districts.

8. Create an understanding of the model for the adoption process that will be used by the Consortium.

The process and activities involved in the two-day meeting were identical to the ones described in Hastings Case Study.* At the end of the first day, the Park City representatives generated the following list of concerns and questions about the Consortium and NIE:

1. How are we to become aware of available programs?
2. What approaches are best to take in the selection process?
3. Are required materials identified with each program?
4. How does the training take place?
5. What is the cost to the district?
6. What commitment is to be made by the district?
7. Are consultants available after initial training?
8. May we examine existing programs at this conference?
9. What is NIE and what does it do?
10. What is the timeline from this meeting to completion?

*As part of the research of the Consortium Project, a case study was done on Hastings, another school in Midwest State.

The second day's activities were designed to answer both their questions and those of the other districts invited to the Joining-up Conference. Included were general discussions about the Consortium, specific discussions of concerns about change, an introduction of the Linking Agency staff, a presentation on the composition of Decision Making Groups, an explanation of the needs assessment, individual interviews, and requests for ERIC search and debriefing. (Consortium Joining-up Conference Report by Jack Carter & Lenore McNamara, Agust 11 & 12, 1976.)

III. INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Following the Joining-up Conference, Carter's first step was to meet with Bob Starrs, the city-wide curriculum director, on September 9, 1976. They discussed the presentation Carter had been asked to make to the Board of Education. According to Starrs, the Board perceived the Linking Agency positively, but its members were somewhat skeptical of the Consortium.

Starrs also asked Carter to meet with the principal at Alison Gray Elementary School. He indicated that this school had been the one selected to work with the Consortium project. (Consortium Contact Report, September 10, 1976.)

By contrast to the other principals in the district, Martin Wiggins was a man who loved teaching and supported his teachers, but some thought he was afraid to ask them to do anything. He appeared to be generally conservative and indecisive.

After an initial meeting with the linking agent, Principal Wiggins took Carter's advice and completed the first step toward implementation by appointing the Decision Making Group (DMG). Carter recommended that it be a multiconstituent group made up of no more than nine people selected from Board of Education members, parents (who were selected from a group of ten names collected by Wiggins on the basis of their ability to meet time requirements and their expressed interest), some faculty members, Wiggins, Carter, and Bob Starrs. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

In February of 1978, it was reported that the DMG was made up of the principal, three classroom teachers, the Title I reading teacher, one Board member, two parents, and Bob Starrs, the curriculum director for Park City.

Early in the process a problem arose in the DMG when a

principal from another school came and sat in on the meetings to see how the process worked. Initially, Wiggins was somewhat nervous about having the other principal there, but the situation was resolved by a discussion with Carter and the principal stayed. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, June 9, 1978.)

Interviews were conducted by the linking agent, Jack Carter. The procedure used by Carter was a technique developed by a company called Exchange-o-Metrics. The title of the manual Carter followed in these interviews was Interview Protocol and Techniques for the Galileo Questionnaire. The interviews took at least thirty minutes apiece, and Carter spent two days interviewing about twenty staff members. The information was tabulated according to key words or concepts and then sent back to Exchange-o-Metrics for analysis; however, before this could take place, the company dissolved and the data was rendered inaccessible.

Staff Interviews

These interviews began on September 20, 1976, coinciding with the previously scheduled Board of Education presentation by Carter that evening. Carter expressed a fear at this time that Mr. Wiggins, the principal of the Alison Gray School, was a little concerned about having an outsider come in and, to some degree, take over his building and his reading program. Carter states, "I think that I brought those fears to rest and he does not seem to be so concerned and now he's on a very cordial, friendly basis with me." Carter also corrected an assumption on the part of Wiggins that he (Carter) was a reading specialist. He assured Wiggins that if reading experts were needed, they would be brought to the school. (Consortium Contact Report, September 23, 1976.)

At the Board of Education meeting Carter learned that principals in Park City had recently been put on a merit pay increase plan. It was, therefore, important for them to have new programs in their buildings and to show progress in such areas as improvement of reading and standardized test scores. Carter reported that other district principals with whom he had worked previously on NDN adoptions were a little jealous of the fact that he was involved at the Alison Gray School, perhaps because he seemed to be spending more time on this adoption than on the old NDN adoptions. (Consortium Contact Report, September 23, 1976.)

Needs Assessment and Problem Definition

Carter met with the DMG on October 6, 1976, to set up organizational guidelines. He distributed a handout which explained the Consortium, gave a short talk about its history and asked for and answered questions from the DMG. As this activity was completed quickly (in less than 45 minutes), Carter began talking with the group about a needs assessment for Alison Gray. Carter explained alternative methods for accomplishing the needs assessment. He discussed: (1) playing the Chalk Talk game, a curriculum needs assessment device, (2) surfacing questions to be answered and assigning teams to answer those questions at a scheduled meeting (October 18, 1976), and (3) conducting a formal needs assessment. The Decision Making Group decided to raise questions (see below) to be answered at the next meeting. (Consortium Contact Report, October 8, 1976.) The DMG gathered the data from test scores, anecdotal reports from teachers, community attitude information (evidently gathered by surveying the PTO, which was not a very large sample), and student attitude questionnaires which were given in written form to third, fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students and verbally to Kindergarten, first, and second grade students. The data to be obtained concerned:

1. Number of working parents;
2. Number of transient students;
3. Spanish-speaking surnames and bilingual students;
4. Number of broken homes;
5. Media access in the home (cable television was the only source of educational programs).

At the next meeting of the DMG, the results of the surveys were presented to the assembled group.

ALISON GRAY DECISION MAKING GROUP
Results of Needs Assessment Questionnaire
Given to Students

	Grades 1-3 (N=182) 14 Non-English Speaking	Grades 3-9 (N=192)
Have Cable TV	33%	33%
Have library card	N/A	50
Family has library card	50	75
Attended more than one school	12	50
Attended 3 or more schools	N/A	12
Have news or magazine subscriptions	75	82

Parents read to child	75	50
Have reference books	N/A	50
Have own books	N/A	82

Other data collected from pupil personnel cards indicated that 33% of the students (K-6) were living with either the mother or step-parents, but not with both parents. One-third of the students from Kindergarten through sixth grade were classified by the school as transient (i.e. attended more than one school). There were twenty-nine Chicano students and four black students (a total of thirty-three minority students), and most of the students who scored below the 50th percentile in reading achievement test scores were of Mexican-American descent. Approximately forty-five students were enrolled in the Title I reading program. Bilingual teacher aides worked with non-English speaking students.

For the school as a whole, however, reading achievement scores were above the national norms (i.e. above the 50th percentile). This finding came as a surprise to the members of the DMG for they had been operating under the mistaken belief that the students were reading well below national norms. (Consortium Contact Report, October 22, 1976.)

Based on the data, Carter prepared the Problem Statement which was approved with minor changes by the Decision Making Group. The corrected Problem Statement read:

1. What Kind of Problem is it?

   There is a lack of a management and record keeping system to keep track of reading skills acquired by students. This is a particularly significant problem since the transiency of students, both inside and outside the district, is high. Thirty-five percent of the students at Alison Gray have Spanish surnames. Roughly fifteen students enrolled at any given time at Alison Gray are non-English speaking. Four areas viewed with concern by the staff are: A. Student motivation, B. Lack of relevant enrichment materials for student use, C. Poor classroom performance in vocabulary work, and D. Poor classroom performance in comprehension. Test scores in reading for Alison Gray Elementary School conform to the national norms. There are, however, a clustering of students at the bottom of the scale, most of whom are from the sizable minority group mentioned above. Generally, because of the low

socio-economic level of this particular school community, there is a low incidence of parent involvement in the school.

2. Who Is Affected?

Students are affected in several ways. Too many are functioning below national norms in reading. Teachers lack a fresh approach in dealing with the motivation of students. Transient students are at a decided disadvantage because of the lack of a meaningful and comprehensive record keeping system for skill levels in the reading program. The principal and administrators in the district are concerned and are examining some alternative methods to alleviate this problem.

3. How Are They Affected?

The needs of many students are not being met at Alison Gray Elementary School. The secondary schools in Park City are very critical of students sent from the elementary schools. The fact that the current reading program is not meeting the needs of students is a discouraging fact to the teachers at the school.

4. Who or What is Causing the Problem?

No consistent reading management and record keeping system is in use. There is a considerable variance among the members of the faculty as to the approach and method of reading instruction. Students moving in from out of district (transients) and students moving from one grade level to another within the school must have their skills in reading reassessed. Some of the faculty members teach in a very traditional mode. Some teach using grouping and some apply the learning center method. Staff development programs at Park City up to this time have generally been provided by textbook companies. The teachers and administrators at the school suffer from insecurity as to their competence in the area of reading instruction.

5. Goal for improvement

Teacher training must be provided to create more organized teaching and better management of reading instruction. More attention needs to be given to the affective domain and in working with students in this area. Providing the above,

coupled with better materials and approach, should help more students read better. Adoption of an appropriate program from the Consortium R&D Pool could meet these stated needs.

The Program Selection Process

Carter began the process of developing selection criteria for the program to be adopted by asking the DMG what kinds of things they definitely did not want in the district. After discussing them, the Chalk Talk game was used. The Director of the Consortium Project central office in Massachusetts was present and helped Carter with the curriculum analysis simulation. After this activity, a list of selection criteria was developed. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978).

SELECTION CRITERIA

1. A reading program that will raise levels of affective and cognitive skills in children;

2. A consistent reading instruction management system;

3. Growth in teacher and administrator reading instruction competencies;

4. Available consultants and high-quality teacher-training;

5. Improved management of transient students.

The Decision Making Group met on December 7, 1976, to discuss possible programs which met the selection criteria. Carter mailed the catalogues of program abstracts to Bob Starrs two weeks before the meeting to allow time for the DMG to review them. Starrs, however, did not get the catalogues to the principal until the morning of December 7. The group thus spent most of that meeting time reviewing the programs in the catalogues. The planned telephone conference with the resource pool coordinator at Consortium Central who had prepared the project descriptions and was to be available to answer questions about any particular program, was postponed until the next meeting. After reviewing the forty program abstracts the DMG narrowed the number down to eight. They were:

1. Individually Prescribed Instruction in Reading

2. The Reading Improvement Program (RIP) (a pseudonym)

3. Alice Bilingual Project

4. Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI)

5. Project Instruct

6. New Adventure in Learning

7. Andover's Individualized Reading System (AIRS)

8. Learning to Read by Reading

The faculty expressed two concerns at this time. First, a new program would take too much time in record keeping, and second, the program might not be applicable for Kindergarten through sixth grade. (Consortium Contact Report, December 15, 1976.)

At the January 17, 1977 meeting, the list of eight programs was to be narrowed down to three. The selection was not completed because the principal did not get descriptions of the programs distributed to the members of the DMG. A slide presentation concerning barriers to change was shown at the meeting. Principal Wiggins had invited the entire faculty to this meeting in order to keep them informed. Only two additional faculty members attended the meeting, however, possibly because the temperature was ten degrees below zero. Of the two extra faculty members who attended, one was initially supportive and the other was skeptical. The latter indicated that she felt more positive as a result of the meeting and was encouraged to return to the next meeting and to invite others.

On January 18, Carter visited the bilingual coordinator for the Park City School District. Carter explained the Consortium involvement after the coordinator had expressed interest. The coordinator told Carter that if Alison Gray adopted a bilingual program he could contribute bilingual program money. (Park City has one of the few ongoing bilingual summer programs and has been in operation for about seven years). Carter felt that the contact had been particularly valuable in giving the agency credibility among the minority population in Park City. (Consortium Contact Report, January 17, 1977.)

The DMG met on February 1, 1977, and reduced the number of programs to three. A thirty minute conference call to the resource pool coordinator at Consortium Central, whom Carter considered very valuable, was made at this time. The three programs selected were ECRI, Andover Reading Program, and Reading Discoveries. (Consortium Contact Report, February 7, 1977.) After looking more carefully at

the Andover Reading Program, it was judged to be too expensive for this district and the Reading Improvement Program (RIP) was added to the list. (Telephone interview with Martin Wiggins, May 23, 1978.) A brief description of the four programs which had been considered follows.

Reading Discoveries -- This program is successfully implemented in two schools, grades one through six, in Park City. This is one of the Developer/Demonstrators from the National Diffusion Network pool. It provides a management system within which to collect and use prescriptive data but does not include a preconstructed file of prescriptions to use with each skill level to be taught.

Andover's Individualized Reading System -- The AIRS program, an extensive materials and management package, was developed in Andover, Massachusetts. The cost of materials makes adoption of this program relatively expensive, and to Carter's knowledge, no schools are using the materials outside the Andover, Massachusetts, school district. (No longer true after August, 1977.)

The Reading Improvement Program (RIP) (a pseudonym) -- This program contains a variety of components, management systems, and materials. It includes an extensive record keeping and management system which was not considered to be a great need for Alison Gray because of the size of the school district and the small number of teachers.

Exemplary Center for Reading Instruction (ECRI) -- This program has identified teaching techniques important for reading success. These include methods to: elicit correct responses from non-responding pupils, establish high mastery levels of responses with performance and rate as criteria, vary the number of practices (and time) to each pupil's learning rate, correlate language arts activities to increase student responses, utilize effective management and monitoring systems, diagnose and prescribe instantly when errors or no responses occur. (The Linking Agency Implementation Plan, Alison Gray School, Park City.)

Originally, Reading Discoveries had not been considered because Bob Starrs, the curriculum director, had wanted to bring a new program into the Park City system. As a result of interest in the Reading Discoveries program, however, the DMG decided to give it serious consideration. (Consortium Contact Report, February 7, 1977.)

Again, the faculty were invited to the DMG meeting. Ten teachers came and stayed -- an unusually high turn-out

indicating a great deal of interest. In addition, the other elementary school principal attended the meeting and stayed to talk informally with Wiggins and Carter for an hour and a half about the selection process.

On February 22, 1977, the DMG met to review the Reading Discoveries program which was to be presented by two faculty members from each of the two Park City Schools using the program.

Nearly the entire faculty at Alison Gray attended the meeting, to the surprise of the Linking Agent. They expressed concerns about the amount of time needed to implement the program, and were assured that it actually required far less time than setting up individualized work.

After these presentations, the faculty and administration were ready to pick the Reading Discoveries program according to Carter. He practically insisted, however, that on-site visits be made to the two other programs in order to insure a high quality decision. The principal agreed to make the travel arrangements and Carter agreed to substitute for a day or so while teachers were gone as their funds for substitute teachers had been depleted. (Consortium Contact Report, March 7, 1977.)
At this point, Carter perceived that interest and commitment were running extremely high. He described it as one of the high points of the year for the DMG. In addition, he was relieved that the principal had shown interest and had volunteered to expend time and energy to set up the two visits. He anticipated that Reading Discoveries would be selected at the next meeting.

Ultimately Reading Discoveries and the Reading Improvement Program (RIP) remained. ECRI was dropped from consideration after representatives from the Decision Making Group visited a site in Council Bluffs, Iowa, and decided it was not appropriate. DMG representatives and other faculty members visited the other sites.

On May 11, 1977, the DMG met. Carter arrived early to talk with the principal, but when they entered the meeting room, they found the entire DMG and all the faculty assembled. Carter used the "spend a buck" prioritization decision making model with the group: he directed them to assume that they had one dollar, and that they were to vote by dividing the dollar according to the amount they wanted to spend for each program. "The vote was very strong for RIP. Some people spent their entire dollar on it." (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 23, 1978) The decision was made to adopt three elements of RIP: comprehension for the upper grades, and skill building

and word attack for the lower ones. The three reading skill kits were ordered in May, 1977.

The training program was scheduled for August 18 and 19, 1977. Carter was concerned because training at Hastings was scheduled on those same two days and Hastings was about one and one-half hours away from Park City. He wanted to be present at training activities for both sites. (Consortium Contact Report, May 31, 1977.) A representative from the Reading Improvement Program was contracted to do the training on August 18 and 19. Because Carter could not be present, Lenore McNamara from the Linking Agency facilitated the training sessions. During these sessions, the trainer advised Alison Gray faculty to hire an aide to insure successful implementation. Carter called Bob Starrs to discuss this matter, and Starrs agreed to hire an aide for the program at Alison Gray. Wiggins said that he had approached Starrs previously about an aide, but Starrs indicated that he had not been aware of the matter.

The Reading Improvement Program consultant was considered by Linking Agency staff to be the weakest of the three trainers who had come to the state for program adoption training. According to Carter, she knew the content material well but her ability to interact and work with people on a staff was minimal. The trainer had "discipline problems" with classroom teachers during the first day of the session. She kept telling them it would be impossible to adopt this program in less than five years -- this was not a feasible approach for the Consortium, which was operating on a 30-month contract. (Consortium Contact Report, August 26, 1977.)

The faculty was paid $25 a day to attend this session. According to Carter, things were so broken down in Park City due to the training that he had a hard time establishing a time line. The principal and the faculty were discouraged. It was a struggle during the next three months to get Wiggins to keep a meeting with Carter. Carter indicated that on occasion he would call Wiggins' office to set up a meeting, only to arrive and be told that the meeting had been put on the calendar for another time. This happened more than once, according to Carter. In addition, the promised aide was never hired and the teachers were ready to drop the whole RIP program. (Consortium Contact Report, September 2, 1977.)

In October, Carter insisted on meeting with Martin Wiggins, the principal, and Bob Starrs, the curriculum director. Wiggins discussed the delays in implementing the program. He stated that it had required more work than anticipated, and that the training had not been very good. He also

showed Carter some things that had been done to expand the resource file. Carter suggested that a target date of second semester, at the latest, be established for full implementation of the word attack kit. Wiggins agreed with the strategy and planned to call a meeting of the DMG in December. (Consortium Contact Report, November 21, 1977.)

Program Adoption

The program began with testing of students in December, 1977. January 30, 1978, marked the first day of actual work on the word attack skills kit in the Reading Improvement Program (RIP). Wiggins indicated that this was later than planned but that materials had to be placed in the files before they could be used. (Telephone interview with Martin Wiggins, May 23, 1978.) Students were divided into Levels A, B, C, D. Level A was mainly Kindergarten and first grade students with a few second graders; Level B was mainly second and third grade students with a few fourth graders; Level C was mainly fourth grade students with some third and fifth graders; Level D was fifth and sixth grade students.

Twelve Spanish-speaking students were placed in the reading trailer (a mobile classroom) with an aide. Jim Penny, who was a sociological observer, behaved as an intervention strategist at this time. He discovered that the twelve Spanish-speaking students were not working with the program and were being isolated from the other students. He mentioned this fact to Carter who asked Wiggins about it; Wiggins told Carter that the students were no longer separated this way. (Jim Penny's field notes, February 2, 1978.)

Wiggins made decisions regarding scheduling of RIP time periods before the opening of school based on the procedure for using RIP materials. These schedules were placed in the handbook before the opening of school. The teachers did not seem to mind the fact that these decisions were made by the principal without input from them.

During the RIP period, all other activities were halted and the entire student body studied reading for about 25 minutes. This concept was taken from the program at Hastings. (Telephone interview with Martin Wiggins, May 23, 1978.) These 25 minute periods occurred between 1:30 P.M. and 2:00 P.M. on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday. A sixth grade teacher said Wednesday was skipped because there were no aides available on that day. (Jim Penny's field notes, February 2, 1978.)

Evidently, the DMG did not have much to do with the plans for actual implementation during the 1977-78 school year.

As of February 2, 1978, the DMG had met only once. (Jim Penny's field notes, February 2, 1978.) Carter reported that he had had a great deal of difficulty getting Wiggins to schedule this particular meeting in December, 1977 even though he had repeatedly stressed the importance of monthly meetings for the DMG. (Consortium Contact Report, December 10, 1977.)

At the meeting, it became apparent that Wiggins had been trying to do all the duplicating himself and much of the building of the materials files for RIP. According to Carter, Wiggins would duplicate things himself and go through all the hassle of trying to build files alone, rather than give the linker a print order which could be done at the Vo-Tech school at cost. Carter reported that it took a long time for Wiggins to change this behavior. Wiggins also used to do all the scheduling himself, and it would take him four or five hours to schedule 350 kids. Carter was amazed that he did it in that length of time, and suggested that Wiggins schedule faculty meetings after school so the faculty could help with these responsibilities. Wiggins agreed that the faculty would do this but had reservations about some students not being scheduled properly; therefore, he did it himself. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.)

Wiggins appeared to have strong ownership of the program and worked hard to see that it succeeded. He even taught a group of students during the scheduled RIP periods. Wiggins believed that a full time aide was badly needed. A CETA worker, who did not have the necessary skills, had worked at the school unsuccessfully. Wiggins also had no luck with volunteer helpers. He indicated a desire to free the Title I teacher to coordinate the program. (Telephone interview with Martin Wiggins, May 23, 1978.)

The aide situation seemed to be frustrating to Martin Wiggins, yet he did not insist that one be provided. In fact, according to Carter, when the one aide who had been provided quit coming to school, he did not report this development to the central office for a considerable amount of time. (Telephone interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) Nevertheless, the adoption procedure continued during the spring of 1978.

Statewide Conference for Consortium Schools

During the spring, four representatives from the Alison Gray School attended the Client Capacity Building Conference held in Urban City on March 16 & 17, 1978. Although Carter was to hold two state meetings during the second year, he believed that the adoption sites were not

developed fully enough to warrant two meetings. It was finally decided by Carter and the Consortium that he would be permitted to have one longer meeting in the spring -- the one in March.

Thirty-six to forty people were expected from the four schools in this state involved in the program. Due to cancellations for a variety of reasons, eighteen people actually attended. Carter believed the meeting was valuable because it developed a "sense of community" among the participants. The persons in attendance asked that two meetings be scheduled in 1978-79. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 27, 1978.)

The goals of this meeting were to:

1. Create an understanding of the national picture of the Consortium and the role of the participating Midwest State school districts within it.

2. Create an understanding of and desire to utilize the resources available to the participating districts, both within and outside the Consortium.

3. Further the understanding of the relationship between Consortium Central, the Linking Agency, and the participating schools.

4. Provide an opportunity for the staff and the participating districts to interact with one another on common terms.

5. Provide an opportunity for the staff and the participating districts to interact in order to form the basis of a "community" working/sharing relationship.

6. Reacquaint the participants with one particular element of the change process, Barriers to Change, as it will relate to their implementation and maintenance procedures.

7. Provide an opportunity to share past to present timelines and formulate future timelines.

8. Establish the institutionalization of the model for the adoption process used by the Consortium.

9. Create an understanding of evaluation procedures.

   Note: According to the report, the only evaluation which was dealt with at this conference was a Q-Sort developed by Dr. Jim Penny which was to be

used to determine the level of adoption in a district. (Report: Client Capacity Building Conference.)

The people in attendance from Alison Gray were the Principal, Martin Wiggins, and three teachers. In meeting goal #7, they developed the following timeline for future activities.

March 1978	Start study skills Set up Study skills files Regroup students into competency groups by teachers in faculty meetings.
April	Test for new levels Check on request for clerical aide Conduct two faculty regrouping sessions Design notes home Move supplies to basement Label areas for extra papers Use aide for smaller groups Hold trip to Hastings for some technical assistance File Reading Improvement Program cards in permanent records Announce that we'll be starting game file.
August	Implement school-wide record sheet Begin inservice for game files
September	Design file for cards
October	Start comprehension file
November	Begin comprehension skills teaching
December	Check on how all files are coming
January 1979	Hold Open House
February	Present to the PTO films about RIP
March	Establish Goal: 75% students at their level for word attack

April	Transfer RIP information from cards to records
May	Establish Goal: 75% students at their level for study skills.

Time and Cost Factors

For the Alison Gray adoption, the intervention strategies required to implement the program took approximately two meetings per month for a year. This varied, however, according to the time of year. For instance, December is a non-productive time because of Christmas holiday plans and parties, according to linking agent Carter. On the other hand, there were more than two meetings during some months. Carter also did not visit school during teacher negotiations in late March and early April. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) There were faculty meetings, in addition to scheduled DMG meetings, but there is no record of just how much time was involved. Teachers received no recompense for attending the meetings except during the inservice training, when they were paid $25 per day. The estimated total cost was $5,250 spent by the Linking Agency and $3,215 contributed by the Consortium. There were site costs for an aide, but no figures were provided. A chart showing the breakdown is included at the end of this case study.

The chart below shows the breakdown of the number of person days which were estimated by the Linking Agency for full problem solving and adoption process.

	All (4) Client Schools In Midwest State	Alison Gray
1) Site Selected	8	2
2) Decision Making Group (DMG) Selected	8	2
3) DMG completed Problem Identification and Needs Assessment	45	12
4) DMG established R&D Selection Criteria	6	2

5) DMG selected reading program	12	4
6) DMG projected installation problems, needs	6	2
7) DMG completed Installation Plan (inc. process, actors, responsibilities, assessment design, and schedule	12	4

Evaluation Procedures

The implementation plan for the Alison Gray School called for a number of specific evaluation procedures. RIP evaluation methods were to have been used along with others to be developed by the faculty.

In order to measure cognitive growth, teachers were to administer standardized achievement tests to students. Affective growth was to have been measured by group attitude surveys. Another attitude survey was to be administered to teachers, administrators, and a subsample from the community. These tests and surveys were to have been given in September, 1977 and April, 1978. There is no record that they were administered, and according to Martin Wiggins, the principal, no evaluation was done.

At the DMG meeting in December, 1977, Wiggins was told that 50% of all student testing for the word attack skills kit would be completed by December 15 and that all students would be tested by the day after Christmas vacation. (Consortium Contact Report, December 10, 1977.) In addition, teachers expressed concern that the scores to date were at a lower reading level than anticipated and that the students were being overloaded with different kinds of tests. Apparently achievement testing was being done in order to group students.

The Implementation Plan prepared for NIE had called for a detailed evaluation design to be completed by September 15, 1977 -- immediately following the training session. Given the outcome of that session and the mood of the faculty, it is hardly surprising that the projected evaluation plan has never developed.

When asked about evaluation, Carter replied that he was not an evaluator, but that he had asked for assistance from the central Consortium agency, but had never received it. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May 26, 1978.) Therefore, an evaluation of the adoption received little

attention, although some student testing did occur prior to the actual start-up.

IV. CONCLUSION

In many respects, Martin Wiggins is the pivotal character in this case study. He has been described as being about 5' 8" tall and unusually conservative in appearance and behavior. According to the original case study writer Jim Penny, "you'd pick him out of a million as an elementary principal of 'the old school'." Wiggins clearly felt pressed to become involved with the Consortium by Bob Starrs, the curriculum director. Starrs exerted a great deal of influence among the district principals as a change agent and central administrator (Case Study for NIE, Matthew Miles, August, 1978.) In addition, the merit pay raise recently instituted for principals may have been an added incentive for Wiggins to do what he could to improve the school's standing.

Given the fact that he probably felt more discomfort than enthusiasm about the prospect of Consortium involvement, he readily accepted the responsibility. He reacted well to the Joining-up Conference and proceeded almost immediately to get the ball rolling with faculty when he returned to Alison Gray. Although he initially felt threatened by the presence of the linking agent and another district principal at the Decision Making Group meetings, he did, from all accounts, work well with the DMG during the selection process, and began to move toward a more participatory style of leadership.

After the training program he clearly went back to his old leadership style of making decisions himself. Only one Decision Making Group meeting was reported in 1977-78 and Carter had trouble getting Wiggins to arrange it. Wiggins also determined the implementation procedure by himself and wrote it up in the school handbook without consulting the faculty or the DMG.

Carter perceived that the principal was able to control decision making by not scheduling meetings and by doing the work himself. In all fairness, Wiggins was very concerned about the program's success and he contributed a great deal of time and energy to it -- in part because of his unwillingness to delegate tasks. For the most part, he was respected by the teachers at Alison Gray, some of whom felt a bit sorry for him. Others wished he had been more concerned with the adoption process, and had relied more on group decision making. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May, 1979.)

The picture which emerges of Martin Wiggins is that while he would have preferred not to have been involved in the Consortium, once the decision was reached, he proceeded to make sure that the program was implemented and ultimately that the students participated in it. During the decision making process, as he dealt with the members of the faculty and the DMG, Wiggins moved from a directive, non-collaborative style of leadership to a participatory one. Although he tended to retreat to his former style following the training, there was some evidence that he had expressed a willingness to share scheduling and materials development responsibilites with his staff once the program was installed. (Consortium Contact Report, December 10, 1977.)

The work of the Decision Making Group seems to have gone about as smoothly as one could possibly imagine. The members were well chosen and reflected a multiconstituency grouping. Carter's contact reports reflect constant progress from preliminary interviewing to needs assessment to the problem statement to establishing selection criteria to actual selection, visitation, and decision making. The group responded well to such devices as The Chalk Talk Game, The Barriers to Change filmstrip and the Spend-a-Buck decision making technique. Although they clearly felt ownership of the RIP program, the weaknesses of the training sessions and the fact that Wiggins delayed in scheduling meetings prevented them from taking a more active role in implementation.

Early in the decision making process, the DMG approved a problem statement which clearly referred to the fact that the student body was 35% Chicano or Mexican-American and that a large percentage of this minority group were not only transients but were also clustered on the lowest end of the reading scales. In establishing the selection criteria for the reading program, the Decision Making Group seemed largely to have side-stepped this problem. It is only partially dealt with in the 7th and last item on the list -- "Improved Management of Transient Students." In the process of sorting through the available programs, none of those designed specifically for bilingual groups or Hispanic populations were given final consideration. Carter had also been told by the district's bilingual coordinator that additional money would be available if such a program were selected. Carter later said that he would have preferred this type of program because it would have been better able to handle the situation described in the Problem Statement.

Carter's role in dealing with the DMG and the principal reflects his personal style and abilities as linking agent. As an outsider he was somewhat threatening to

Wiggins, and yet at the Joining-up Conference and on several occasions during initial meetings of the DMG, he was sensitive to the principal's anxieties and able to relieve them. In dealing with the DMG, he was obviously concerned with process and with client capacity-building in terms of decision making. Rather than impose his views and opinions about programs, for example, he focused attention on the process involved. Only once did he actually step in -- to insist that the group visit the sites of the programs they had selected for the final round. Thus he prevented the group from deciding immediately to adopt the Reading Discoveries program which had already been installed in the district. It is interesting to note that although Carter anticipated that Reading Discoveries would be almost certainly adopted at the next meeting, it was in fact, not selected after the site visitations. (Consortium Contact Report, May 24, 1977.)

When the school's budget was exhausted and Carter volunteered to substitute teach during the on-site visits, the fact that his offer was accepted demonstrates a certain degree of trust in him by the faculty and administrators. Their attitude stands in sharp contrast to the derision and lack of cooperation extended to the outside trainer from the RIP program. Although her knowledge of the program was extensive, she seemed to lack the necessary skills to win the faculty over. This could have a devastating effect on the adoption. The fact that the adoption was not entirely a failure after the training session was probably due largely to the efforts of the principal and his positive attitude toward Carter.

The staff at Alison Gray speak positively of Carter, personally and professionally. A third grade teacher who talked to Jim Penny about Carter had only positive comments about him, and went as far as to say, "Whatever is done in the school, the Linking Agency gets the credit." She was quite impressed that Carter gave the faculty his home and business telephone numbers in case there were any questions. The teacher said that at the time of the decision processing, two-thirds of the faculty were "backers" and one-third were "draggers." Carter brought the "draggers" along, those who were originally concerned about the extra work; these same teachers later discovered that the workload was not as great as expected. This discovery could also be attributed to Wiggins' extra work.

The delays in the implementation of the program following training seem to have been caused by a number of factors: the training which seemed to discourage the faculty, the principal's insistence on doing all the work of collecting and copying materials himself, and the lack of assistance in the form of an aide. The linker found it difficult to

arrange meetings and wanted to decrease school contact time after training, then begin to disengage from the school. (Personal interview with Jack Carter, May, 1978.)

In assessing the situation at the school after the Decision Making Group finally met on December 1, 1977, Carter noted that in the future he would insist on monthly meetings of the DMG. He acknowledged that he should have been more adamant and directive in demanding that meetings take place, rather than accepting the excuses that Wiggins came up with every time he scheduled a DMG meeting. (Consortium Contact Report, December 20, 1977.)

Clearly at the point of implementation there can be real tensions generated within a school as teachers are finally called to act -- to behave in a different way and to change to a new program. They may feel enthusiastic in some cases, and extremely resistant in others. The change in behavior is a key element, one which requires a concomitant change in the linking agent's role as well. The agent's role is no longer one of facilitator for group decision making, but evolves into one of troubleshooter and confidence builder.

In one sense, Carter's philosophy of pulling away from the school during the implementation period is justified. The school is on its own during the initial phases of implementation, leaving little for the linking agent to do in the classroom without the necessary technical expertise. During and after the training period, the linker's role is a difficult one of observing without seeming to be meddling. Carter ultimately played the role of "problem solver" in helping Wiggins to get materials printed, in trying to get an aide, and in actively insisting that the DMG meet regularly. Had he done this sooner, a smoother implementation phase might have taken place. This case study indicates that there is a need to focus on and define the role of the linking agent during and after the inservice training period.

Carter's suggestion to focus on a single skills kit to be implemented during second semester rather than to work on all three kits at once facilitated the adoption. The first kit, word attack skills, was mostly completed in half a year and the principal was confident that the other two would be completed by the end of summer, 1978. While the target date of a fall implementation was not met, the reading program was ultimately implemented in the school.

V. SUMMARY

The Alison Gray adoption presents an interesting combination of events and actors. Wiggins, the conservative and reluctant principal was pushed into

involvement by Bob Starrs, a dynamic, innovative curriculum director. The well-chosen and interested Decision Making Group, working through all the steps of the selection process as laid out in the Consortium plans, selected a reading program to meet local needs yet curiously ignored minority group needs which had been highlighted in the problem statement. A high degree of program ownership which emerged from the decision making process was stifled by an uninspiring trainer and a principal unwilling to reconvene the DMG and to share responsibility with faculty. An experienced and respected linking agent worked with the principal to develop his leadership capacity, yet leaned philosophically toward decreasing his involvement after the training. And finally, the school adopted an over-ambitious program which required large amounts of file-building and scheduling to get started.

It is not surprising that the implementation was delayed from fall to winter, and that a small segment rather than the whole package of three kits was installed. What is surprising and encouraging is that at a total cost of approximately $8,565* to the school and the Linking Agency, the new reading program was implemented, the teachers were trained, and the principal's leadership style was modified. In addition, the members of the DMG and faculty were made aware of R&D products and of other programs in local schools as they became acquainted with and used a number of problem solving techniques and decision making tools.

At this point, the overall evaluation and effect of the Reading Improvement Program on student achievement are unexamined parts of this case study. Some student testing has already occurred, and it is likely that this data will become available in the future.

*See Appendix A.

IMPLEMENTATION BUDGET WORKSHEET

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION[1]	SOURCE OF SUPPORT[2]				
		Site	The Linking Agency	Consortium	Other	Total
I. PERSONNEL[3]						
Teachers	Stipend for training in August ($50/head x 16)			$ 800		
Linking Agent	Annual Salary divided by 5		$3,360			
Substitutes	For teachers attending follow-up in-service	$100				
*Other*_____						
_____						
II. CONSULTANTS[4]						
Program	Trainer from The Reading Improvement Program			$ 600		
Evaluation	Outside The Linking Agency					
Other	Technical assistance from other sites					

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION[1]	SOURCE OF SUPPORT[2]			
		Site	The Linking Agency	Consortium	Other	Total
III. MATERIALS AND SUPPLIES[4]						
Training						
Implementation	The Reading Improvement Program Kits			$1,515		
Evaluation						
IV. REPRODUCTION						
Training	Materials			$ 200*		
Implementation	Materials and reproduction during year			$ 100*		
Evaluation						
V. TRAVEL						
Training						
Site Visits by Linking Agent						

* Estimates

ITEM	DESCRIPTION AND JUSTIFICATION[1]	SOURCE OF SUPPORT[2]				
		Site	The Linking Agency	Consortium	Other	Total
V. TRAVEL (cont.)						
Site Visits by Consultants	17-18 visits to Park City		$1,050			
VI. MISCELLANEOUS[6]	Conferences		$ 840*			

* Estimate

Epilogue to Alison Gray Elementary School Case Study

Introduction

This epilogue describes Year Three of the Consortium Project at the Alison Gray Elementary School in Northwest State and it records some participants' views of the project as a whole. It is focused on interviews with the linking agents and with Park City school system personnel (see the Appendix for a fuller description of data collection). Participants were asked about their involvement in and opinion of the Reading Improvement Program, RIP, (a pseudonym), the process of selecting and implementing this innovation, the results of this process and program, and the role of the linker.

Their story reveals that many issues described in the previous case study on Alison Gray remain largely unresolved. The clerical work associated with RIP is still copious and evaluation of the program has not been fully undertaken. Problems identified during the initial needs assessment -- low achievement by bilingual students amd low parental involvement -- are explicitly not addressed by RIP. Nevertheless, participants are, for the most part, very pleased with what RIP does do: provide an effective reading management system.

One of the most interesting aspects of the Alison Gray story is the interplay of shifting objectives and motivations. Goals seemed to evolve over time or at least participants described them differently at various points to different people. In order to trace this evolution, the epilogue opens with some current participant views about their original motivations for becoming involved with the Consortium Project. Then an updated description of the Park City community and the Alison Gray School provides a context for the report of the project's results.

Background to Participation

Participation of the Alison Gray School in the Consortium Project was initiated by Bob Starrs, then director of

instruction and now assistant superintendent of Park City Schools. He had witnessed successful innovation in other Park City schools when they had collaborated with the Linking Agency. He and the principal, Martin Wiggins, were concerned that communication and relationships among staff at Alison Gray were not as smooth or warm as they could be; therefore, they had worked together to arrange communication. Although the situation had improved to some extent, a significant gap remained between the teachers of kindergarten and first grade and the teachers of grades two through six. Starrs hoped that participation in the curriculum adoption process might enhance Wiggins' administrative skills and facilitate communication in the school. Starrs also believed that reading scores in Alison Gray in particular and Park City in general were not as high as they should be and that a management program was needed. Interestingly, these objectives were not discussed in the original case study nor apparently, were they identified explicitly during the problem identification phase of the Consortium Project.

Wiggins stated that his initial motivation was determined by the staff's desire to implement a management system and to improve the reading curriculum. He also recognized that other schools had already adopted reading management programs and he knew that Alison Gray would have to implement one soon. He appreciated the opportunity to adopt such a program through the independent efforts of this school rather than having to accept one that had been mandated district-wide.

The three teachers who were explicitly asked about their original motivations reported that a classroom management system was their top priority when initially considering participation in the adoption of a new curriculum. They wanted to be able to monitor the skill level of each individual student and to develop more efficient means of communicating about student abilities with other teachers. Again, these objectives were not mentioned during the original needs assessment. The teachers' current perceptions of their original motivations mirror precisely the ways in which this adoption has been most successful. Whether this success has revised peoples' retrospective views of their objectives or whether these were the original priorities and effort has been focused in their direction is a tangle of forces which is difficult to dissect.

Environmental Context

Park City is a small town by east coast standards, but is one of the few urban centers in this region. It is a

growing community where innovation is regarded, at least in some circles, as desirable. To a much lesser extent than in Hastings, for example, but to a noticeable degree, the residents seem to assume that local methods are relatively unsophisticated but frequently more appropriate than imported methods.

Farming is the major occupation of the district. The increase in irrigation and in cattle feed lots has provided the basis for economic and population growth. Housing developments in Park City are expanding rapidly, necessitating the building of new schools. Access to modern, innovative architecture and curricular and administrative practices is important to the assistant superintendent who encouraged participation of the Alison Gray School in the Consortium Project. He recruits nationally for open positions in the school system and is eager to import talent to the community. The school system does in fact include a number of innovative programs. Parents are encouraged to investigate the variety of settings and curricula available in town and to choose the school that they prefer for their children.

This community is beginning to experience many of the the problems that have plagued larger urban systems in recent years. Last year contract negotiations were slow and more acrimonious than before. The contract for the current school year was not signed until the spring of this year. Although teachers did not strike, the bitterness associated with the bargaining was seen by the assistant superintendent as a damper on morale this year. In addition, the school system has been involved in a suit with the state government about a mandate to hire bilingual staff. Because of the scarcity of trained bilingual individuals, the administration cannot even solicit applications let alone hire enough bilingual staff to satisfy the mandate. These problems have been accompanied by a growing suspicion between school staff and the community. The assistant superintendent believed, however, that although residents might be suspicious or disappointed about schools in general they still tended to support their own neighborhood school.

The relationship between the Midwest linking agents and the east coast Consortium central office is one aspect of the environmental context worth noting. Both linking agents grew up in small towns in the midwest, not unlike Park City. They and many Park City residents tend to assume that outsiders have access to important wisdom, but that outsiders frequently misunderstand the Park City community. The linkers acknowledged the value of their collaboration with the Consortium, but underscored some

ways in which this affiliation had not sufficiently addressed their needs. Specifically, they objected to the pre-arranged timeline associated with the model problem solving activities and to the methodology used in preparing the original case studies. They would have preferred being given more flexibility to schedule events as they saw fit and to have had more control over the data collection and analysis for case studies about the Alison Gray project. These sentiments affected the preparation of this epilogue (see Appendix) and they may have influenced the degree to which the model problem solving process is discrepant from the actual sequence of events at Alison Gray.

The School Context

Within Park City the Alison Gray School had the reputation, at least with central administration, of being among the least innovative of the elementary schools. All the others had participated in a major innovation effort by the time this project began. In the community, the school also had the reputation of producing students with lower academic achievement than the community norm. Its students include a number of residents of a low-income housing project which seemed to contribute to this reputation. But, in fact, at the time the Consortium Project was initiated, the reading achievement scores of Alison Gray students were only slightly below community averages and national norms.

The current principal, Martin Wiggins, has occupied the same position at the Alison Gray for some six years. He is friendly, earnest, and eager to manage his school well. Both his teachers and the central administration perceive him as a very kind man who is sometimes not ready enough to delegate responsibility or take forceful action. He attempts to manage even the minute details of administering his building and finds himself continually overwhelmed with tasks. The ensuing disorganization distresses some of his teachers but they do not apparently know how or care to help him reassign responsibilities in a more efficient pattern.

Parents of Alison Gray students do not participate extensively in school affairs. The principal reported that a rather limited Parent Teacher Organization chapter at the school had finally collapsed completely this year. He attributed its demise to the increasing percentage of working parents. They no longer have the time to be involved with the school. The adoption of the reading program has not had a major effect on home/school relationship. Those parents who know about the program are in favor of it. In fact, when the program had not begun in

October of this year a group of parents visited Wiggins to learn why. They encouraged the principal to speed the preliminary testing and clerical work so that students could begin the instruction. This action suggests that at least some parents have taken a significant interest in the new reading program.

The Product

A brief review of the original Alison Gray needs assessment and problem statement process in the first part of Year One permits an interesting comparison with the characteristics of the Reading Improvement Program (RIP). The primary reading achievement problem identified at the Alison Gray School concerned the bilingual population. The prior case study reported that a majority of the students who scored below the 50th percentile on reading achievement tests were bilingual. Nevertheless, the problem statement developed by the Decision Making Group with the linker's assistance focused on the need for a reading mananagement system which would help teachers monitor and facilitate the progress of all students. It also identified low parent involvement as a cause for concern. While RIP provides a recordkeeping system, it does not claim, nor does it appear to offer, particular benefit to the bilingual population or to affect parent involvement.

RIP is a reading instruction management system which has four major purposes: to identify reading skills, to assess individual pupil skills, to provide procedures for managing the instruction of pupils at different levels, and to monitor pupil progress. Materials include criterion referenced tests for assessing student skills, forms for grouping children according to skill level and for monitoring individual student progress, a resource file of suggested instruction materials and activities, and some instructional activity workbooks. Alison Gray ordered the materials for three of the six skill areas included in RIP: word attack, study skills, and reading comprehension.

The first year of implementation of RIP 1977-1978, (the second year of the Consortium Project) was devoted in large measure to the preparation of printed materials. Tests were duplicated from spirit masters and administered to students. Scores were transferred to the special record keeping cards, an important component in the management process, and files for individual students were prepared. Teaching of RIP during Year Two was limited to the word attack area.

During Year Three (1978-1979) all teachers taught comprehension as well as word attack and some have begun to

teach study skills with RIP also. Each new component in the RIP program involves duplication of large numbers of forms. Students are tested every two and a half weeks, grouped according to skill level within a given component, and instructed for the following two weeks on material designed for their level. At the end of the two weeks students are retested, regrouped, and, as appropriate, they begin instruction at the same or a new level. Test and instruction materials must be duplicated for each instruction period and records completed to chart each student's progress.

At Alison Gray, RIP is taught the first period in the morning four days a week. All students in the building are grouped and instructed at their RIP level at that time. The groups include students from different grades and different classes. Last year the kindergarten and first grade students were also cross-grouped in their own levels. This year, however, the mixed grouping does not include kindergarten and first grade. Children in these two grades remain within their own classrooms and the teachers use the program to group students within the room. The reason given for this reversion to the self-contained, pre-RIP method was that at least one of the primary teachers was not skilled at using the program and consequently her students were being incorrectly grouped. This revision is interesting because it relates to the issue that the assistant superintendent identified as one of the problems he had hoped the Consortium Project would alleviate.

The implementation of RIP has continued to be hampered by the duplication of materials, scheduling instruction of the different skill level groups, and locating a sufficient number of instructors to teach all skill level groups. The principal has personally duplicated all the forms that RIP uses. The basement of the school is stacked with tests, worksheets, etc. but he can barely stay abreast of the demand. Apparently there has been no attempt to replace the CETA aide who worked briefly last year as a clerical assistant for the RIP program. The assistant superintendent is aware of this problem. Although the school board will not approve funds to pay an aide, he had arranged that the forms for next year will be duplicated at the central administration building during the coming summer.

Scheduling the various groups of children is another complicated chore, and Principal Wiggins has also assumed primary repsonsibility for this burdensome task. All children in the school, nearly 400 students in kindergarten through sixth grade, participate in RIP. At the beginning of the year, Wiggins drew up the schedule of assigning

teachers to RIP groups of students. As the year progressed and students moved between groups depending on their rate of learning, the teachers took more responsibility for keeping track of individual students. However, the principal maintained a master schedule that lists the location of each student during each period when RIP is taught.

When students were all grouped according to skill level in the three skill areas there were more groups than there were teachers in the building. Last year every teacher in the building taught RIP, even the music teacher and the principal. This year the number of RIP teachers has been reduced because the new music teacher did not participate and federal regulation prohibited the involvement of Title I teachers. The principal still teaches a RIP group. At the beginning of this year "leftover" groups (one or two per period) were left to study independently while teachers supervised as many groups as they could cover. When a supplementary training session was provided in the fall, the trainer suggested that this practice was unacceptable. The linker recommended multi-grouping so that students on more than one level could be taught in the same group. This suggestion has been followed in some cases, but teachers reported that "some kids have to work independently" during RIP period. "But they actually do work," according to one teacher.

Teacher reaction to the program is generally favorable. They believe that students benefit from the careful monitoring of their progress so that they do not miss important skills or repeat work unnecessarily. "It's really good to teach skills," remarked a fourth grade teacher. Before, you sometimes didn't get right down to that in the rush to do everything else." With such complete records on each child, teachers feel more assured that each child is learning what s/he needs to know. As one teacher said, "I probably did this in my head before but now I'm more sure of where each child stands." This assurance helps them feel more confident during parent conferences because they can give specific information about a student's level of accomplishment.

Most teachers felt that the time and energy necessary to maintain records for the program was well spent. One teacher echoed the sentiments of several of her colleaques as she was completing records during her coffee break. "I don't find the forms too much of a nuisance. You have to take time for any records and they're necessary. Before we didn't have good records." Only one teacher reported that she thought all the testing was too much and that she might better spend some of the time letting her children read for enjoyment.

The staff had differing views about the ease with which students were tested, grouped, and assigned to teachers. Of the five teachers interviewed, two believed that there was "very little trouble trading groups of kids around." Two teachers in the coffee room were overheard planning for a child to take a test he had missed because of illness. They reported that most scheduling arrangements were made by such informal conversations. A first grade teacher said, "I really enjoyed trading the children across rooms and I don't know why we don't do it any more." On the other hand, two teachers thought this aspect of the program was not well organized. One objected to having her children divided into groups and sent to different classrooms during the first period of the day. It disrupted her schedule and rhythm. The other complained that "some teachers decide about groups and then just tell the others whereas they should work it out together."

Everyone agreed that the principal takes upon himself too much of the clerical work required by RIP. Teachers perceive that the principal does most of the organization and makes most of the decisions about the program by himself. Not only is this job too demanding for one person but also at least one teacher said she would like to have more input into plannig the program. When asked whether teachers might take a more active role in making these decisions she indicated that few would probably be willing to take the extra time necessary for that participation. Wiggins himself acknowledged, " I spend a lot of my principal and personal time running things off for RIP and a few key teachers help me." He hopes that more of this work will be handled by an aide or by teachers next year. Nevertheless, "Someone still has to coordinate it and the principal is the logical one to do it," said Wiggins.

The Process

In reviewing the process of adopting the RIP program most respondents praised the events of Year One. Members of the Decision Making Group recalled in general terms the sequence of steps they had followed, from definition of the problem, to review of various programs and observation of a few, to selection of RIP. One teacher remarked that this orderly, planned process was a necessary aspect of the successful adoption in this school. She said that general apathy and low expectation for success would probably have foiled the adoption without this structure. A teacher who had not been in the Decision Making Group remembered voting on the final selection and said she had appreciated being involved in that way. Another recalled this process of selection as requiring teachers to spend some time considering their decision. "That was one part...where the

process was really good. It made people feel involved and built up their commitment some." The principal also believed that the teachers' involvement in selecting the program helped smooth its implementation. "We have had textbook changes which teachers voted on before, but didn't really know about. They weren't nearly as well accepted because the teachers weren't involved. The fact that we had this planned and they were prepared helped keep the resistance down."

It is difficult to know exactly which elements in the adoption process are responsible for the commitment and lack of resistance described by the staff. Wiggins recalled that he had opened the Decision Making Group (DMG) meetings to the entire staff during the spring of Year One. He thought that if all teachers participated in the selection of the program, the implementation of it would be smoother. The prestige of the DMG was high because it included parents, the district director of instruction, and a school board member. Wiggins believed that there were "some laggards among the teachers but in front of that group they wouldn't speak up and now they do OK with the program." One teacher mentioned that the director of instruction had "planted the idea that teachers' evaluations were dependent on how cooperative they were" with the adoption process. Despite those allusions to pressure, the teachers interviewed simply recalled with pleasure that they had been involved in the selection process.

The new reading program was the subject of several staff meetings during the second year. However, a separate Decision Making Group did not meet after the middle of the first year. The parents dropped out during the final selection process because, according to the principal, they felt they had no expertise in the remaining issues to be considered.

No facsimile of the group has met in the building this past year. Problems of implementation have been dealt with through a variety of relatively uncoordinated channels. The linker supplied materials, provided consultation, and arranged a supplementary training experience. The principal attempted to adjust schedules and responsibilities where necessary. Teachers worked together to solve some of the minor scheduling problems which have arisen.

There appeared to be no format or identified organizational structure within the building to monitor, evaluate, or facilitate implementation of the program. Nor are there plans for developing these capacities within the system. This lack was mentioned by several teachers and the

principal. They were concerned about staff turnover because no provisions have been made for training new teachers. One teacher believed the linker had played an important role in monitoring the program and wondered who would serve that purpose after this year.

Respondents mentioned only one possible "spin-off" from Alison Gray's participation in this model problem solving process. The assistant superintendent has established a district-wide curriculum committee whose purpose is to review and set curriculum policy in the district. This group is composed of representatives of different curriculum disciplines and school buildings. It recently mandated reading management programs for all elementary schools but it refrained from dictating a single program district-wide. In its multi-disciplinary composition and its adherence to the "implementers should be choosers" philosophy, it resembles the Consortium problem solving model. Respondents could describe no other examples of the use of the model, either by individuals or in the school as an organization.

The extent to which the actual adoption of RIP was effected by the Consortium's problem solving process is difficult to gauge. The rather general description of the stages given by the participants along with their failure to apply the process to subsequent problems suggests that they did not develop a deep understanding of the model. The discontinuity between the needs assessment, the selection criteria, and the characteristics of the RIP program call into question the logical orderly coherence of actual events as compared with the problem solving process. The abandonment of the DMG during the first year and the lack of attention to the evaluation and ongoing monitoring of the program demonstrate that in these respects the model was not followed. Nevertheless, respondents believe that many components in the process facilitated the adoption of RIP.

The Role of the Linking Agent

The linker for Alison Gray was replaced at the beginning of Year Three (see Hastings epiloque for a fuller description). The new linker, Lenore McNamara, had worked successfully in other schools in Park City, but she had to establish relationships in the Alison Gray School. She found that the principal was cordial initially, but she perceived that he was intimidated by her. She proceeded slowly to convince him that she was not going to try to interfere with or criticize his management of the school. Wiggins pointed out that he had found the linkers to be important when they were getting started with the project,

but that he hadn't needed them so much this year.

Based on observations, McNamara is currently received very warmly in the school. The principal appeared to be glad to see her and some teachers went out of their way to talk with her. This year she has been involved in bringing another innovation (concerning a physical education program) into the school through another aspect of her Linking Agency. She believes this successful program has helped build her reputation as a helpful person.

Both McNamara and the previous linking agent concur with the theory that the linker's involvement at the site should decrease steadily after the middle of the second year in the adoption process. Following this ideology, the linker visited the school approximately once a month during Year Three and made additional telephone contact with the principal and the assistant superintendent. She has seen herself primarily as a resource linker this year and has worked not be be perceived as an evaluator. She emphasized that she is not a reading specialist and cannot, therefore, evaluate or directly advise teachers about their implementation of RIP. She also mentioned a concern that she would undermine the teachers' trust in her as a helper if she assumed the task of evaluating them.

As a response, linker McNamara arranged for a second training last year. This trainer served as both evaluator and implementation consultant. She observed the use of program procedures and materials and made suggestions about adaptations which might simplify implementation in this building. One of the trainer's suggestions was that groups of children who were not covered by a teacher during the RIP period be combined with other students. As mentioned earlier this suggestion has been heeded only in some cases. The trainer also sympathized with the principal's and teachers' plight of coping with so much paper work. She suggested that children be taught on a given skill level for more than two weeks and tested a little less frequently. The principal believed that extending the time would be boring and has not discovered an alternative to testing and regrouping students every two weeks.

McNamara discussed the program regularly with the principal and tried to consult with him about his role in it. He expressed some annoyance about the overwhelming amount of clerical work that he has shouldered, yet he did not initiate attempts to lighten his load. McNamara tried to generate alternative solutions with him and to help him negotiate a solution with central administration. She also attempted to link Wiggins with other resources in the district. For instance, she helped him plan the content and process of improving public relations for the Alison

Gray School. Together they arranged for one or two articles about the school to be printed in the local newspaper. McNamara also tried to bring the principal printed materials in response to problems which he identified. In general, he appeared to be fond of the linker and appreciative of her help but she observed that he does not make a concerted effort to follow through with many of her suggestions.

McNamara also organized a state-wide conference for Consortium Project participants at the end of Year Three. The conference was designed to help participants review and solidify the innovations they had made. Wiggins and the assistant superintendent were the only Park City representatives who attended this conference, although teachers had also been invited. Several Alison Gray teachers mentioned that McNamara not only provided access to outside resources but also played an important part in supporting and monitoring the implementation this year. Knowing that she will be coming around once or twice a month helped teachers maintain quality control on their use of materials and procedures. They believed this monitoring created a gentle but important pressure.

In general, the linker was perceived by all respondents as extremely important in the early stages of the adoption process. The linker played a key role starting the process, providing leadership, introducing materials and funding sources, and managing the time and structure of the problem solving process. Many people also appreciated the further access to resources, both within the system and outside, and the monitoring that the linker provided during this year. Opinion was mixed about whether the linker would need to continue to provide this assistance next year. In fact, McNamara will continue to visit the school because she is involved in other innovations there and may continue to provide many of the support services that she offered this year.

Outcomes

With respect to the original concerns about bilingual students and parent involvement, this innovation has had no specific effect. The Consortium Project has had some success, however, with the subsequent objectives of introducing and implementing a reading management system and improving children's reading test scores. The secondary objectives voiced by Bob Starrs, currently assistant superintendent, have not been accomplished to the same degree. His goals included increasing Martin Wiggins' administrative skills and improving communication among teachers in the Alison Gray School. There have been some

possible effects of the program which were not originally intended.

All respondents agreed that RIP established an improved management system for monitoring the development of reading skills in individual students. Throughout the school all teachers use a uniform and complete record keeping system for each student. If a child misses or fails a test, that child's home room and reading group teacher both know what scheduling arrangement must be made in order for the child to be taught according to his or her skill level. Teachers expressed great satisfaction in knowing that they are able to keep precise track of each child's progress.

Examination of achievement test scores from October, 1978, and the previous October show that Alison Gray students averaged the same or better scores in reading in comparison with national norms. In comparison with other students in Park City they ranked about the same as they had the previous year, at or slightly below the community norm. The assistant superintendent attributed the general improvement of scores in Park City to a city-wide emphasis on reading and to the implementation of new reading management programs in several schools.

Communication patterns within the school were mentioned as a target of this innovation by both the assistant superintendent and the principal. They had hoped that the program would increase collaboration among teachers and particularly between the primary and intermediate groups of teachers. As the principal said, "Generally speaking teachers have had to have more contact with each other as a result of RIP and that is a change from before." Teachers agreed that they are in touch with each other about planning for children but they differed in whether they believe that their communication is sufficient and effective. Some feel that these negotiations are now routine and comfortable. One mentioned that the teachers did not work together as well as he would like to see them doing. The cross grouping between primary (kindergarten and first grade) and intermediate (second through sixth grade) classrooms did not continue past the first year. Whether this experiment can be reinstated next year after one of the primary teachers (who was incorrectly grouping students) retires remains to be seen.

Participation in the reading program has helped the principal broaden his skills to some extent. He leads meetings more effectively and has at least gained exposure to people and programs outside Park City. However, he is still reluctant to delegate authority in his building. He still handles much of the clerical work for the program. Not only is he unable to complete these tasks

singlehandedly but also they detract from his other responsibilities as principal. The assistant superintendent is aware of these problems and is attempting, with the advice and support of the linker, to help the principal locate and use appropriate assistance.

Another result which seems to be related to this innovation is the formation of a district wide curriculum committee which appears to have been formed with some of the problem solving model's theories in mind. One of the Alison Gray teachers is the reading representative on this committee. She gained an overview of reading curricula and of the problem solving process as a result of her experience on the Decision Making Group and in the implementation of RIP.

A second "spin-off" from this innovation was the implementation of a physical education program in the Alison Gray School by the same linker through a different component of the Linking Agency. This new program has been a great success in Alison Gray and the physical education teacher there has become so enthusiastic and skilled that she is now a national trainer for this program. This success has stengthened the reputation of the linker as a helpful and effective innovator and may increase her opportunities to continue supporting the RIP adoption effort.

APPENDIX

Data Collection and Methodology

My experience in collecting data for this study is illustrative of the environmental context in Park City. The linkers told me that local people would be rather closed and reserved with a stranger, that they would be intimidated by questions whose answers they did not know (questions, for instance, about the problem solving process). I was not only encouraged, but virtually required by the linkers to postpone site visits until McNamara was able to accompany me. This requirement stemmed from their concern that I collect adequate information and that I not alienate clients with whom they must continue to work.

The linkers themselves also reported a history of miscommunications with outside researchers. They were offended that investigations originally billed as descriptive studies became critical evaluations. They felt that previous case writers had not gathered enough data to report accurately on local conditions.

Once I did meet with the linkers and the Park City people I found them extremely friendly and willing to provide information. They did not demonstrate any of the resistance which I had been led to expect. Part of this ease is no doubt attributable to the fact that Lenore McNamara called the Alison Gray principal to explain that we would be coming to visit and then went with me to the school.

By the time she and I were able to coordinate our schedules, Alison Gray was in its final week of school for the year. Reading classes were no longer being taught so I was unable to observe a RIP classroom in operation. Teachers were extremely busy, but I was able to talk with five of them while they were on their coffee breaks. I also examined some of the RIP materials and toured the school building. During my visit to Park City I also interviewed the assistant superintendent in his office. The following week I again met with the principal and the assistant superintendent, the only Park City representatives at a state-wide conference arranged by the linker. Away from their work responsibilities and meeting with me for the second time, they were both more relaxed and they amplified the stories they had told me in Park City.

My conversation with both linkers who had worked in Park City were extensive and open. They also provided copies of the reports which they had prepared for the Consortium. Other written data sources include previous case studies about Alison Gray and the achievement test scores shown to me by the assistant superintendent.

LINKING KNOWLEDGE TO SCHOOLS: THE PROCESS OF CHANGE IN SIX SITES

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INTRODUCTION

Schools and Change

It is difficult to imagine a modern-day teacher or administrator whose school career has not been touched directly by change, innovation, or reform. But it is also difficult to find significant differences in schools once the initial glow and flurry of changing passes.

Since the late 1950's, education has been preoccupied with changing goals, curriculum, instruction, work patterns, governance structures, relationships with local community and external agencies. Some of these activities have been piecemeal, aimed at a specific objective such as reading instruction or decision making; others have been comprehensive in scope, seeking change in nearly every aspect of a school or district organization (see Herriot, 1979). Some changes have been initiated locally by administrators or teachers motivated by new professional visions; others have been encouraged by financial incentives at the state or federal level or mandated by the courts.

Problems of Change

Problems have accompanied most activities to change schools irrespective of their scope or source. Teachers, administrators, and lay people have resisted changes, effectively employing both active and passive tactics. Individuals, schools, and entire districts have highlighted cosmetic changes, claiming superficial alterations as evidence for deeper reform (Charters and Jones, 1975). Where changes have moved beyond the problems of resistance and symbolic readjustment toward actual implementation, internal and external conflicts have often created ill will, low morale, and the need for a return to the status quo (Deal and Nutt, 1979; Deal et al., 1975). Together, problems of resistance, cosmetic realignment and conflict have derailed or neutered most change activities in education (Baldridge and Deal, 1975) and as a result, most schools continue to operate today much the same as they always have. To many, the resiliency of the status quo provides ample testimony that maybe it is the reformers, rather than the schools, who have a problem. Increasingly, arguments point out that change is not necessarily good (Meyer, 1978). But others continue to maintain that the schools need to be fundamentally overhauled for a variety of reasons. The problems that have arisen are attributed to the way that changes have been introduced.

The Endless Search for a Better Way

Focusing attention on the deficiencies of change approaches has stimulated a variety of explanations for why things go wrong and a counterpart set of strategies for making change and reform easier and more effective. Seeing the problem as one of individual recalcitrance encouraged, among other things, in-service training and teacher-proof materials. Emphasizing the organizational inadequacies of schools stimulated organizational development (OD) activities and the creation of new structural designs (Charters, et al., 1973). Calling attention to the failings of "top-down" strategies focused attention on local site initiative and the merits of ownership and adaptation (Berman and McLaughlin, 1973). Focusing on the powerful role of community reaction in undermining change highlighted the importance of involving parents and local residents (Hugenin, et al., 1979). Centering the problem of changing schools on the slippage between social science knowledge and practice spawned the ERIC system and stimulated the establishment and growth of federally-funded Research and Development (R&D) Centers and Regional Laboratories.

One by one, however, these explanations have been re-examined and re-evaluated as the reach of strategies they support greatly exceeds the actual grasp. Either the explanations are in error or the strategies are poorly conceived or inexpertly carried out. But wherever the fault lies, schools continue to experience problems of changing.

Interestingly, however, everyone keeps trying. Academics and policy makers create new theories explaining why things go wrong and what could be done differently. New explanations produce new strategies. New strategies are then tested against the persistent realities. Researchers evaluate the outcomes and propose new ones, and with continuing confidence and hope the cycle continues.

Purpose of This Paper

This paper falls toward the evaluation stage of the change cycle. Its purpose is to examine the experience of six schools that participated in a federally-funded effort to change reading instruction by installing the products of R&D, using a systematic problem solving approach to guide the effort. The RDU (Research and Development Utilization) Program focused attention on three areas which its designers hoped would make this endeavor different from, and potentially more successful than, others: (1) relying heavily on reading approaches (or products) built on scientific knowledge and research (or validated experience), (2) emphasizing a systematic school-wide approach to identifying and defining a problem as a preliminary step in choosing a solution, and (3) creating a role that would serve as a link between the knowledge base and

schools and provide direct technical assistance as teachers, administrators, and parents worked collectively to define problems and to choose and carry out appropriate solutions.

From case studies prepared by on-site researchers and epilogues developed after short visits to each site this year, it is possible to look at common themes that arose as the six schools participated in the RDU program over a three-year period. By relating the six case studies to the existing literature and theories of change in schools, it is also possible to generate some preliminary explanations for why change or the process of change in these six sites is similar to or different from experiences in other settings, and to suggest some issues which may be worth pursuing further. These two purposes -- (a) outlining some themes that cut across six schools participating in one project of the RDU program and (b) suggesting some explanations and issues that emerge when these themes are set in a general context of change in schools -- provide the primary focus for the paper.

The paper is divided into three main sections. The first briefly sketches a programmatic and methodological backdrop. The second highlights the major themes that emerged across sites during the three year project. The final section provides some explanations and interpretations.

BACKGROUND: PROGRAM, PROJECT, SITES, METHODOLOGY

The RDU Program

The RDU Program is one of several sponsored by the National Institute of Education to disseminate research products and results. RDU was funded in 1976. Its design consisted of three main components: a knowledge base of curricular products created through federally sponsored R&D activities, specifications for a systematic problem solving process, and specifications for the role of linking agent -- a human connection between the knowledge base and local sites and a facilitator of the problem solving activities at the school level. The RDU Program's distinctive quality was in combining products, process, and the role of linker into one integrated strategy. The primary target of the program was to change instruction in basic skills at the local level and, by institutionalizing systematic problem solving strategies, to continue the ability of schools to confront problems in a more rational, systematic way. Changes in both the technology of instruction and the formal structure of educational organizations -- a new decision making body, using a more rational approach -- were intended by RDU program designers. Inevitably, the program's goals were seen differently by the federal agency, the projects, and the local sites. Each level emphasized or reinterpreted goals that were more com-

patible with their own needs and objectives. These differences are particularly apparent on the issue of whether or not the problem solving process was to be "institutionalized" at the local sites.

Seven projects in various parts of the country were funded by RDU. Each project was permitted some latitude in approach although the three components of the general strategy -- knowledge, linkers, and problem solving were to be included.

The Consortium Project

All six sites which provide the information for this paper are part of a project operated by The NETWORK, Inc. The NETWORK has headquarters in Massachusetts and, for several years, has sponsored and evaluated innovative activities in schools across the country. The ideology of The NETWORK emphasizes the role of problem solving and knowledge use in change. The NETWORK has also had wide experience in training and using linking agents for a variety of change projects. In Massachusetts particularly, The NETWORK maintains close working relationships with schools and employs a number of linking agents who are trained and housed in the agency's headquarters. In the case of the three linking agents involved in the six RDU sites, one had a close ongoing working relationship with The NETWORK and, in effect, was part of their regular paid staff; another was a well-known local consultant in another state hired and trained by The NETWORK specifically for RDU; the third linker was formerly a teacher in one of the districts and was trained and hired by the project for the three year funding period.

School Sites

The six sites of The NETWORK's project which were used as a basis for this paper were drawn from three states. Two sites are from the northeast; two are from the central midwest; and two are from the upper midwest. In addition to their regional differences, the six sites vary in other important ways. The sites represent the range of urban, suburban, and rural locations. Two are junior highs; the others are elementary schools. Some of the schools are large and some are small. Some have modern facilities while others do not. The sites serve different populations and have unique programs and organizational characteristics. The sites differ significantly in their previous experience with innovative programs and their reason for becoming involved in RDU. The thumbnail sketches of each site briefly summarize the differences which are described in length in the individual case studies and epilogues.

Alison Gray Elementary School is located in a farming community in the central midwestern part of the country. Almost a third of the 20,000 population is Chicano; median family income is $14,500. The school has 383 students, sixteen teachers, many of whom are relatively inexperienced, and a principal. Of the schools in the district, Alison Gray is considered one of the least innovative.

Hastings Elementary School, the most rural of the six sites, is located in the same midwest state as Alison Gray. The population of Hastings is 294, almost entirely white, with a median income of $12,000. Farming is the major occupation and 50% of the district's students live on outlying farms. The town is traditional, stable, and isolated. Hastings Elementary School (K-8) enrolls 80 students and has eight teachers. The district superintendent also serves as a principal of the elementary school. Under his leadership, Hastings has become a fairly innovative school despite its isolation and conservative environment.

Mitchell Junior High School, the most suburban of the six sites, is located in a 35,000 person suburb in the upper midwest. The median income is well above average reflected in the fact that families of students who attend Mitchell come from homes valued between $40,000 and $100,000. Like many suburbs, the district of which Mitchell is a part is faced with declining enrollments and belt tightening. There are 65 teachers for the 1,281 students in grades 7 - 9 at Mitchell. Compared to other sites, the organizational structure of Mitchell is relatively complex. It has a staff of a principal, two assistant principals, four area leaders, two and a half counselors, a nurse, a half-time psychologist, and a speech clinician. The school is housed in a modern facility. Approximately 1% of the student population is minority. Half the teachers have been educated beyond a Bachelor's degree. The school has been involved recently with three innovative projects.

Cramer Junior High School, one of the most urban of the six sites, is located in a large city (400,000) in the upper midwest. As a measure of the socio-economic level of the population, 43% of the students at Cramer qualify for Title I assistance. Like other urban area schools, Cramer is faced with problems of declining enrollments, mandated desegregation, and poor discipline. The school of 590 students is administered by a principal and two assistant principals. The staff includes 35 teachers (including special education and Title I), two counselors, one and half social workers, a full-time librarian, and a large number of paraprofessionals. 49% of the students are minority and the yearly turnover rate of students is 48%. The school has a number of federally encouraged or mandated programs for reading and adjustment problems. In the fall of 1979, Cramer became a K - 8 fundamental school in response to a district-wide desegregation plan. Most of Cramer's

students and some of its teachers were shifted to Morse Junior High. Morse has a student body of 880 racially mixed students; the teaching staff numbers 28. Because of population shifts, decreasing enrollments, etc. the school is in considerable turmoil. Its administrators are beleaguered and its teachers relatively demoralized.

Bridgetown Elementary School is located in a large, urban, multi-ethnic community in the Northeast. The school is a combination elementary (K - 6) and junior high (7 - 8) school with a combined enrollment of 1,400 students, one third of whom speak Spanish. Its physical configuration is old and unique: Grades 7 - 8 are housed in a central location with the principal as administrative head; Grades K - 3 and 4 - 6 are each housed in a separate wing under the administrative supervision of an assistant principal. A physically separate Title I program serves about half the student population. Teachers from the K - 3 (n=18) and 4 - 6 (n=20) wings were most initially involved in the reading project.

The Jefferson Elementary School is located in a semi-rural, semi-isolated New England community of 19,000 people. Jefferson is not really rural; yet neither is the town within commuting distance of the two major cities it sits between. Because of this, unemployment is relatively high and the general economic condition relatively low. The population of Jefferson is Yankee and Italian. The Jefferson Elementary School building was built in 1900 and remodeled in 1975. In the remodeling many of the walls that separated classrooms were removed, a change which sparked considerable negative community and teacher reaction. 600 students attend Jefferson. Very few students are minority; many students come from families which are relatively poor. Twenty-five teachers work at Jefferson and are overseen by one principal and supported by a special education staff and a full time nurse.

Despite obvious variations on a number of different dimensions, the six sites (with the exception of Morse Junior High) have one important thing in common: for three years (1975-78) they each formed a multi-disciplinary decision making group, identified a problem in the area of reading, developed product selection criteria, evaluated and chose a new reading program and attempted to implement the program of their choosing.

Generally, the sites went through the following sequence of activities. In Year One, the sites formed a Decision Making Group, identified a reading problem, developed criteria to guide the selection of a packaged solution, selected a product and trained teachers. In Year Two, the sites tried to implement the product (with the exceptions noted in the site description). In Year Three the sites continued implementation activities, but often shifted attention to evaluating the results or expanding the program to other teachers or schools. Each site also worked closely with a linking agent

who provided various types of support in deciding, adopting, implementing and evaluating the new program. Interaction between unique characteristics and a common task produced some notable differences among the six school sites. But, there were also many similarities.

Methodology

In order to record common elements and differences among the six sites, case studies covering the first two years were prepared by external consultants. These case studies are part of a larger study of RDU which looks across projects, as well as sites. The larger study is being conducted by Abt Associates of Cambridge, Massachusetts. This study comprises four substudies that focus on: (1) the role of linkers, (2) school sites, (3) projects and, (4) the National Institute of Education. Once completed, the Abt evaluation will be able to address a number of issues which surround RDU. Their evaluation will provide a broad base for analyzing the experience and for developing generalizations about change.

This paper is based on information taken from only six case studies. As such the data base is more intensive than extensive. We relied heavily on case studies of the project's first two years prepared by others. But, in addition, the three of us conducted two-day visits to each of the sites in the spring of this year (1979) to discover what had happened in the third year of the project and to follow-up on questions raised in the original case studies. Deal and Wiske visited Jefferson; Deal and Gunner visited Bridgetown; Wiske visited Hastings and Alison Gray; Gunner visited Morse and Mitchell. Following these brief site visits, Gunner and Wiske wrote epilogues for each site, updating, and in some cases supplementing, the case studies.

Following the site visits, and especially after the epilogues were completed, the three of us began discussions to identify common themes which emerged in all or most of the sites during the three years.

In distilling these general themes from the case studies and epilogues, several methodological shortcomings of our enterprise became apparent. First, the case studies were prepared by three different writers -- each with a different perspective. While different view points offer some advantages, these differences often made it difficult to know the degree to which similarities or unique features across sites were the product of individual biases. Second, our visits to the sites were extremely short and the timing of the visits often made it difficult to see or have enough time with key actors. Third, the data for the epilogues (and often the case

studies) is based on the perceptions of individuals within the sites. For the most part (except in unusual cases) we were not able to observe directly key interactions or events. Finally, we visited sites and approached the task of distilling common themes with our own set of biases.

For these reasons, the information which provides the foundation for these cross cutting themes is not as systematic as many would hope. Where possible, we tried to recognize the limitations without ignoring the interesting ideas and issues which seemed to bubble up from the cases and epilogues. At the same time, we explicitly recognize that these issues evolved as much from our own intuition and perspectives as from a systematic analysis of valid, reliable information. Consequently, what we offer in the rest of this document is in the spirit of stimulating research rather than making a knowledge claim of our own.

THEMES ACROSS SIX SITES

Approaching complex events requires a framework for determining what is important and what is not. The epilogues were guided by a general set of categories that helped to determine where attention was directed, what questions were asked, and of whom. The general categories focused attention on the setting, the innovation, and the outcome. They included:

environmental context -- the nature of the school site's local community

school context -- the structure, climate, leadership, ongoing events and other characteristics of the school site

the problem solving process -- the rational sequence followed by decision making groups in framing a problem and choosing a solution

the linking agent -- the role and influence of the external consultant hired by the project who worked closely with each site

the product -- the scope and nature of the reading programs chosen by the sites

the outcomes -- the level of implementation and unanticipated changes that occurred over the three year change effort

At each site, the importance or influence of the various categories was different. In some, the role of the linking agent was critical; in others the environmental context overshadowed

the innovation and outcome; in still others the product eclipsed the influence of other categories. Across the six sites, however, the interplay within or between the various categories yielded some general themes or issues which seemed both interesting and important. These issues include: the role of parents; the interplay between the process and existing events; the participation of principals; the role of the linker; the relationship between new products and existing practices; the relationship between the stages of problem solving; the impact of location; and unanticipated outcomes.

In response to an imposed mandate of community involvement, the participation of parents and community residents varied across sites.

In each of the six sites, lay participation was mandated by the RDU design and often actively encouraged by the linking agent. But, despite these forces, parents and local residents generally played a relatively passive role in selecting and implementing reading programs. Their level of participation varied by setting (including prior practices) and by the characteristics of the individuals who were selected for the Decision Making Group.

At Mitchell, participation was discouraged by administrators because previous opportunities to involve parents had attracted individuals with "axes to grind." At Bridgetown, parents who were initially involved in the Decision Making Group stopped coming. Efforts to persuade them to continue were discouraged by members of the Decision Making Group because "they won't come anyway." At Alison Gray, parents who helped identify and define the main problem dropped out in the final stages of selecting the reading program. The reason given for their departure was that they did not have the "expertise" required to make an informed choice. At Jefferson, where two parents participated actively in the early phases of the process, parents left the Decision Making Group during the third year because of a feeling that they were less able to contribute. At the two sites where lay participation was probably most active -- Cramer and Jefferson -- the parents either had been teachers or currently occupy some professional role in schools.

While as a general rule parents and community members were not involved actively in the process, on occasion in some sites they did play an active role as caretakers, maintaining vigil on the process to make sure that their interests were protected. At Hastings, for example, parents were perceived by the professional staff as peripherally involved in school affairs only as long as there are no problems. At Alison Gray, a group of parents came to the school asking why the chosen reading program had not begun on schedule. At Jefferson

several parents attended a slide presentation and thereby inspected the essential characteristics of the MIRP program during its first year.

In this same view, the mere fact that parents and community members are represented on a group which debates school-wide issues may provide symbolic assurance that the interests of the lay constituency will be protected. As new programs are carried into action, parents and community members may fairly look for reassurance that the innovation will be consistent with the values and expectations of the local community. Having representation in the initial decisions may help. But, in addition, as new programs are carried into action, parents and community residents probably check and compare "vital" signs such as the attitude of the students, how closely new approaches fit with local images of sound educational practice, and amount of homework, frequency of progress reports, or other evidence that students are learning. If these signs do not fluctuate too far above or below locally established norms, then parents and residents assume that schools are working. If abnormalities appear, then participation and involvement becomes more active.

The surveillance of the local community may vary by location. In rural schools such as Hastings and Alison Gray, checks of vital signs may be more frequent and intensive than those in urban schools such as Cramer (Morse) or Bridgetown. While slight fibrillation of the heart may be noticed by the community surrounding Hastings, the vital signs of Cramer or Morse may not become important to parents or residents until the "patient" is comatose.

Finally, while parents were not always involved actively in the process of choosing the new program, they did provide important assistance during the implementation year as volunteers and aides. This was especially true at Jefferson and Bridgetown.

In some, the participation of lay people in problem solving activities did not necessarily give them an important voice in determining what was decided. For this to happen, the role of lay people in the process needs to be clarified and carefully structured. But, their participation may have several other important purposes. Merely having representation undoubtedly plays an important symbolic function. Additionally, the participation of parents may become quite active when an educational system gets off track -- particularly in small rural communities. This issue will be explored further in the second section.

There was an important interplay between the process of planned change and ongoing structures and events at the six sites.

As the six sites moved through identifying problems, selecting criteria, choosing products, and moving choices into action, ongoing structures or events often had an impact on the process and vice versa. Sometimes the process stimulated new events; occasionally the process provided an arena in which external issues were confronted and resolved. But most often the process attracted ongoing events and reflected underlying structural tensions and conflicts providing a new arena in which the pageant of everyday life in a particular site was enacted.

In Jefferson, the change effort provided an arena in which the wounds of a protracted and bitter teacher strike were soothed and mended. The strike occurred early in the second year of the project. Once the strike was settled, teachers returned to implement the MIRP reading program. Working hard to put a time consuming program into action provided a visible and needed symbol of teacher hard work and professional dedication. Forced to cooperate and work together, the project provided an arena for deep conflicts to be negotiated, and for strained relationships to be reestablished.

In Bridgetown, the RDU activities provoked old territorial antagonisms and provided an arena in which these turf disputes could be re-enacted with fresh issues. The architecture at Bridgetown encourages the development of cohesive structural sub-groups. Each of three multi-grade groupings (K - 3, 4 - 6, 7 - 8) is housed in a separate building; the Title I program is housed in a basement of one of the wings. Around a number of project-related issues, tensions and rivalries between sub-groups erupted. Project issues thus became a forum for power struggles and territorial protection among the groups. At the beginning of the process, the Title I coordinator was disinvited from the meetings of the Decision Making Group largely through the efforts of the K - 3 (or primary school wing) assistant principal. Later scheduling difficulties between the primary wing and Title I produced new conflicts. In addition, differing levels of implementation in the primary and intermediate wings has produced mutual criticisms: primary wing teachers were labeled as "born again" fanatics; the intermediate teachers were called to task for their inability to replicate the reading program according to the specifications of the developers. There is no evidence that the project itself has caused these difficulties; nor is there indication that the disputes are any closer to resolution. The change effort has merely provided a new stage on which old scripts are replayed.

At Mitchell, strong norms of teacher professionalism and autonomy, informal interaction, and a tendency for the staff to avoid or smooth over have influenced the project at several stages. Interpreting the initiation of the project as top-down directive, teachers operated independently of the linking agent in defining the problem and developing product selection criteria. Later the program was implemented largely through collegial interaction and persuasion. Individual teachers have almost unlimited freedom in choosing whether -- and to what degree -- they wish to carry out the MIRP program within individual classroom domains. Meetings have often become forums where decisions evolve from informal "chatter" among the teachers.

At Cramer, the process provided an opportunity for teachers to vent frustrations and fears over the uncertainties of city-wide desegregation and impending transfers. Through the process teachers were able to keep informed about the progress of the desegregation activities. More importantly at Cramer, however, events external to the school overshadowed the project as well as all other educational activities of teachers. In the face of tremendous ongoing disruption, project activities were undermined. Eventually the project was moved to Morse.

In a number of other unique ways there was a strong interplay between the process and ongoing events: the selection of the reading program at Jefferson and Alison Gray was influenced by the politics of not wanting to select an instructional approach that other schools had; previous experience with the Linking Agency influenced the selection of sites; at Hastings, the process became an opportunity to solve other problems such as providing an opportunity for primary teachers to do something innovative, getting a high school principal more involved in district activities, and confronting ongoing conflicts between various programs and constituencies in the district.

In sum, through a fairly complex, often serendipitous, interplay the RDU change effort provided opportunities for crises to be resolved, old dramas to be staged, unspoken antagonisms to be confronted and old problems to be worked on. In turn, the process was affected in several ways by structural patterns, norms, and events at each site. Ongoing events facilitated, hindered, and, on occasion, totally overshadowed the process of choosing and implementing a new reading program.

Principals (and other administrators) were marginally involved but their support -- or non-interference -- was crucial, especially at certain phases of the curricular improvement effort.

The popular wisdom of changing schools consistently reinforces the idea that the principal is the key actor in the process. Less clear is precisely what the principal actually does. In the six sites, principals (and other district administrators) played different roles at various phases of the effort.

Getting the ball rolling was generally an administrative effort. Either administrators at the district level decided that participation in the Consortium Project would be helpful to a local site (a principal saw the potential of the process to solve a problem or create some other needed opportunity) or the decision was made jointly by the principal and district office administrator. At Alison Gray, for example, a district administrator initiated the activity as a way of moving a relatively conservative school along the pathway to innovation. In Hastings, the superintendent/principal initiated the activity as a way of extending the joys of change to elementary teachers and creating new professional opportunities such as attending conferences. Cramer's participation evolved as other schools in the district, for a variety of reasons, could not participate.

In addition to their initiative in getting the project started, principals also played a strong role in selecting members of the Decision Making Groups. In the actual problem solving activities of the first year, the principal's role was fairly indirect -- even though their direct participation was strongly encouraged by the linking agents. Principals provided resources such as released time and substitutes, encouragement, and usually served as members of the Decision Making Groups.

In terms of their active participation, however, principals varied from site to site. At Alison Gray, the principal was intimately involved in discussions, decisions, and served as the leader of the Decision Making Group. In Bridgetown, the primary grades (K - 3) assistant principal was an active participant functioning as the quasi-principal of the primary wing. At Mitchell, the principal dropped in on meetings occasionally, but did not take an active stand in defining the problem or selecting the solution. At Jefferson, the principal's participation was sporadic, until he was called to task by the linking agent. (There was some evidence that at Jefferson ambiguity between the respective roles of linking agent and principal produced a conflict. After the conflict was confronted and the respective territories of linker and principal mutually staked out, the principal became a more active participant.)

As the reading programs were implemented the role of principals shifted to providing resources, explaining the program to parents and community members and providing encouragement and support to the implementing teachers. Again, however, the role of the principal varied and was often indirect. At Alison Gray, the principal was directly involved in the day-to-day details of the project, himself duplicating materials and teaching reading groups. (His continued involvement in clerical details -- despite the availability of an aide to take over these matters -- may have been an attempt to build legitimacy for his role. There was some evidence that, at Hastings, the principal's customary role may have been undermined somewhat by the presence of the linker.) At Jefferson and Bridgetown, the principal and the assistant principal of the primary wing provided strong informal support and encouragement. The assistant principal also "ran interference" for the project through any externally imposed obstacles to implementation. But, in other sites, the principal played a less direct role and the linking agent served as the administrator or chief executive officer of the new reading program providing assistance, encouragement, and a "conscience" of faithful implementation. Even in cases where the principal was directly involved, the linking agent played a significant role in implementing the program. In no site, however, did the principals directly resist the program. Direct resistance from the principal would probably have significantly undermined the effort.

As the program entered the third year, the role of the principal became more critical in making the program an integral part of the school. Most principals clamored for additional resources and made plans for expanding the program. At Jefferson, the principal formally declared his an all-MIRP school and now uses fidelity to MIRP techniques as a criterion for classroom visitations and formal evaluations.

Overall, however, the principal was more phantom than actor in the process. In the one case where the principal was an integral part of the program (Alison Gray), he was encouraged by the linking agent and district office to get out. Interestingly, the participation of principals in the change effort parallels their customary role in the school. Principals are usually involved minimally in instruction, delegating this responsibility to individual classroom teachers (Cohen et al., 1973). Principals have an effect on instruction through informal channels by providing support, advice, and encouragement (Deal, et al., 1976). However, performance of principals is more heavily enmeshed in keeping the community informed and at bay, making sure the buses run and cafeteria food is reasonable, maintaining control and discipline, and preparing accurate reports which arrive at their destination on time (Deal, Darnbusch, and Crawford, 1978).

The Consortium effort to improve instruction falls within an area where principals are customarily only indirectly or informally involved. In some sites, the linking agent thus serves as a temporary "instructional leader" moving the change successfully through its course. The principal's role is critical, but in most cases indirect. Potentially, principals could severely undermine a project by active resistance. But in none of the six sites did principals choose such a course.

The role of the linking agents adapted to unmet needs at specific sites and was shaped by different stages of the change process.

In schools, role requirements of teachers and principals are relatively clear and unchanging. Borrowing and recasting a typology from Carlson (1975), these roles are "domesticated." In contrast, the role of linker or linking agent appears to be more ambiguous and fluid. Again following Carlson's lead, the role is "wild," constantly in search of legitimate activities, and support. In the six sites, the role of linking agent was chameleon-like, adapting to different hues and textures of individual schools and changing to fill any functional vacuum at various stages of the process. Linking agents served as instructional leaders, group facilitators, teacher trainers, healers, cheerleaders, coaches, "go-fers" to acquire materials and resources, brakes to slow down the process, sponges to absorb conflict, administrators, superegos, go-betweens, and symbols.

At each site, linkers tailored their activities and behavior to fit emerging problems and issues. Although, particularly early in the process, the approaches or "bag of tricks" of individual linking agents were visible across sites, the role was molded by characteristics of schools rather than vice-versa.

At Jefferson, following the strike, the linking agent sent a bouquet of flowers to the school. Later she helped the teachers pick up the pieces left in the strike's aftermath and served as an important source of support and release for the principal by listening to him describe many of the persisting internal dilemmas and scars.

At Alison Gray, the linking agent served the principal as a coach or mentor teaching him administrative skills such as delegation or public relations.

At Hastings, the linking agent performed an important function by absorbing much of the hostility, frustration, and conflict that was generated when materials did not arrive in time to launch the program. In addition, the linker played an important role as a communication link between

teachers and the principal who was unable to deal directly with important issues or conflicts face to face.

When the desegregation and declining enrollment issues made the fate of Cramer and of teachers' jobs uncertain, the linking agent shifted her activities to focus on these concerns, to listen to individual complaints or fears, and to work behind the scenes to provide up-to-date information from higher echelons. As the project moved from Cramer to Morse Junior High, the linking agent played a major role in keeping it alive. She finally found one new teacher at Morse who needed instructional assistance and defined her as the "project." For a while, the linking agent was in search of a place to carry out her role. But, she persisted until she found a problem to address.

At Mitchell, the linking agent was asked by teachers to leave the Decision Making Group while the problem and selection criteria were defined and developed. In this case, the linking agent's non-role served as a symbol of teacher autonomy and professionalism.

In addition to adapting to the problems of specific sites, the linker's role changed in response to different stages of the process. In the early stages of identifying problems, developing selection criteria and selecting products, linking agents played a highly visible and active role in facilitating the process of planned change. Linkers were credited with keeping the Decision Making Groups on track, acting as a "brake" to slow the process down, and serving as a liaison between local problems and external products. Linking agents appeared to believe that connecting products with problems would result in an improved school. At Bridgetown the linker was seen as playing an aggressive role in hounding, bugging, and pushing people along. At Alison Gray and Hastings, the linking agent himself wrote the problem statement and selection criteria. At Mitchell the linker insisted that teachers refrain from selecting products until problems had been defined and criteria developed to guide their selection. At Jefferson, the linker resisted efforts by the Decision Making Group to move quickly through the process and played a strong role in surfacing conflicts and moving the group toward a consensus. In every site linkers located products, arranged for meetings and site visits to obtain more information, and guided the selection process.

As the second year's activity shifted from selection to implementation, the role of the linker changed and became more amorphous. For one linker at least, the transition was accompanied by confusion about the role. As products were put into classroom use, linkers provided support and encouragement, identified and arranged for outside resources to deal with emerging problems, and began to focus

attention on evaluating and publicizing the effort. At Bridgetown and Jefferson the linking agent was a process specialist without a background in reading. In the second year, both she and the teachers were confused and puzzled over her contribution until she identified evaluation as her new sphere of activity. At Mitchell and Hastings the linking agent was credited with keeping alive interest in the program during a crisis-ridden period.

During the third year, the role of the linking agent became even more diversified in response to the needs of specific sites -- partially because the role requirements and activities became even less clear. And in most cases, the level of effort tapered off to occasional contacts with the school. At Bridgetown, the linker focused attention on resolving old conflicts, integrating the Title I Program with the regular program, and expanding the program to other district schools. At Hastings, the linking agent served as a communication link between teachers and the principal. At Jefferson, the linking agent worked closely with the principal to obtain district support for expanding the program and helped members of the Decision Making Group to publicize their program outside the district. In both Alison Gray and Hastings, the reduction in the linking agent's contact with the school was supported by her ideology -- "it's their program now."

In filling unmet needs at different stages of the effort: linking agents facilitated group problem solving and provided a conduit from site to knowledge base in Year One; served as trouble shooters. brokers or network builders, and guardians of "fidelity" in Year Two; and -- although the relationship with sites became less frequent -- often provided evaluation assistance and a push for continuation and expansion in Year Three. Across the three years, the requirements for the role appeared to become more and more vague. As a result, linking agents adapted to the unique needs of each site, often conducting activities which fell outside their sphere of responsiblities. The linking agent's involvement with staff evaluations at Jefferson is a case in point.

In summary, the role of linker varied both across site and time. Given a nebulous role with only general responsibility to see that a process was followed and a product implemented, linkers were required to build legitimacy and support at the site level by adapting to problems, unmet needs, and other local demands.

Across sites, the relationship of the new reading products to existing instructional practices varied considerably.

In moving from one teaching approach to another, two factors enter a complex equation: the characteristics of the existing program and the nature of the new program. Substantial differences between new and old approaches create problems as plans are implemented. How existing practices mesh with new products contributes to the ease or difficulty of putting the new program into place. There are three possibilities. Relabeling old practices with new terminology and other trappings is one. Using the new program to supplement existing approaches is a second. Replacing old approaches with something else is a third (Deal and Nutt, 1979).

At Cramer Junior High School the problem solving process moved haltingly through the phases of defining a problem and developing criteria but foundered as teachers tried to select a product. Eventually, the existing reading program at Cramer was "rediscovered." Teachers reached the conclusion that theirs was as good as any new program that they had seen. In effect, the reading program at Cramer was relabeled as "innovative." Differences between the old and new were primarily symbolic and implementation was nearly automatic.

In Hastings and Alison Gray (and initially at Mitchell), the new reading programs were seen as supplementing the existing programs. For specified periods during the week, the new approaches involved new grouping practices, more systematic diagnostic procedures, and changed roles of teachers and students. Hastings' reading program provided enrichment along with students assuming more responsibility for learning. Alison Gray's program used diagnostic testing as a basis for regrouping students for 25 minutes a day. Although the supplementary programs may also relabel existing practices -- one Alison Gray teacher said "I probably did this in my head before" -- they are intended to coexist with traditional practices. New practice may represent significant departures from existing teaching approaches, but old ways do not have to be exchanged for the new. In theory, implementation is difficult since problems arise around the add-on. But the problem probably would have been much greater if old practices were displaced by the new.

The relationship between existing practices and new programs at Bridgetown, Jefferson, and to a lesser extent at Mitchell was different (even though at Mitchell the original intent was to supplement the existing program). The MIRP program (a pseudonym) involves major changes in the structure of classrooms -- groupings, activities, and tempo -- and in the roles of both teachers and students. The MIRP approach replaces existing practices with a new program of significantly different materials, beliefs, or teaching ideologies and behaviors. Where such new programs replace existing prac-

tices, the problems involved in moving from the old to the new are potentially more acute. Interestingly the MIRP program appears to be more successful in replacing existing practices at the primary grade level. At the intermediate and junior high levels the problems of implementing MIRP exerted pressures to use the program as a supplement to existing practice. At Mitchell, for example, the MIRP program was adapted more to fit with old ways. But, even at the junior high level, participation in MIRP appears to affect how teachers perceive their roles, how they teach, and how they relate to others.

Across the sites, the relationships between new products and existing approaches produced different implementation problems. Putting old wine into new bottles -- relabeling -- is easy. Adding supplementary programs is more difficult -- especially when the new practices are very different. Replacing existing programs is the most difficult task to accomplish and probably requires higher levels of support to carry off well. Where such support is not provided, replacement programs may be supplementary or symbolic. This issue will be discussed further in the final section.

For the most part, stages of problem solving activity, independent segments of activity, and the overall role of the problem solving process was elusive and multi-faceted.

Central to the RDU effort was the assumption that a linear sequence of rational problem solving activities would help schools to make needed changes successfully. In all six sites, the problem solving process proceeded through the required steps: a Decision Making Group was selected, a problem was identified, criteria were developed to guide the selection of an R&D product, and a new reading program was selected.

In theory, the problem solving activities are connected to one another -- i.e., the outcomes of one should inform the next. But although each site moved through the required activities, it was difficult to see these theoretical connections actually taking place. Instead, each stage of problem solving often became a segment of activity disconnected from others.

First, the curricular problems identified by the Decision Making Group often did not reflect the private concerns or expectations of various interests even though these represented the main underlying concerns. At Alison Gray, for example, a district office administrator wanted the school to become involved because the school had not done anything innovative and, in his view, the principal needed to acquire

additional administrative skills. At Jefferson, the principal was concerned about the school's reputation and the need to make teacher evaluations easier. Hastings' superintendent/principal wanted to give primary teachers an opportunity to do something as innovative as the intermediate teachers were doing and was interested in his own continued participation in conferences and outside activities. There was an interest at Mitchell in getting language arts teachers more heavily involved in reading. For a variety of reasons these individual concerns were not surfaced, incorporated into the problem statement, or systematically eliminated because they fell outside the intended scope of curricular improvement.

Additionally, data and needs assessments were seldom used as a basis for identifying problems. Schools were identified as low performing even though test scores were on a par with others in the district. And at Cramer, particularly, teachers expressed extreme difficulty in melding their concerns into a problem statement. Intuitively they knew what the problems were; but for whatever reason they found them difficult to express. As a result, problem statements rarely addressed the subterranean concerns of individuals -- or reflected the main set of concerns of the school as a whole.

Second, the criteria developed to guide the selection of products were often unrelated to the identified problem. At Hastings, the selection criteria were vague and bore little relationship to the identified problem of geographical isolation. At Mitchell, a long list of criteria were extracted from the existing reading program and incorporated in intensely broad range of concerns. At Alison Gray, the original problem ended up as fourth in a list of four selection criteria. Even where a potential relationship existed between problems and criteria, the vague or excessively extensive criteria made their use in product selection problematic.

Third, product selection was not always influenced significantly by criteria. In all sites, the main factor in the final selection of programs was reported to be "seeing the program in action." In Hastings and Alison Gray particularly, the linking agent used criteria in selecting programs for review that were different from those generated by the Decision Making Group. In Mitchell, criteria yielded two programs -- VRP and MIRP -- but the final selection was based primarily on concerns about the term "vocational" in VRP (Vocational Reading Power) and the fact that only MIRP could be seen in action.

Finally, the program selected did not always address the original problem. At Alison Gray, the identified problem was the reading levels of bilingual students, but the program selected was not designed specifically for bilingual

students and bilingual students were eventually assigned to separate areas while the supplementary reading program was in use. At Hastings, excluding the berefits of training and occasional conferences, the problem of isolation of teachers and others bore little relationship to the reading program.

Not only did the various stages of problem solving seem to operate as independent segments of activity, as the schools began to implement chosen products, the gap between segments appeared to widen. In the rational change model, the stages of problem solving are linked to later stages of implementation and evaluation. In most sites, however, the Decision Making Groups disbanded or met infrequently -- on almost a pro forma basis during the second year. The responsibility of monitoring the implementation of the reading program was usually picked up by the linking agent who assumed an administrative role in seeing that plans were carried into action and that important support or resources were provided to teachers. Apart from the contribution of the linking agent, however, problem solving and implementation appeared, once again, as independent segments of activity.

In some sites, linking agents began to gather information in the latter part of Year Two or the beginning of Year Three to assist in evaluating the impact of the new reading program on various dimensions. In theory, such evaluation activities inform prior stages of problem solving and implementation. Almost without exception, however, evaluation activities (when complete) were not used systematically to make judgments about what had worked well and what might be improved.

In sum, the rational, linear model of change appears in practice as less a sequential set of highly connected activities which move schools systematically through concerns, problems, programs, changes, and evaluations, and more a set of discreet segments of activity which proceed in a sequence without structural or substantive connections between the steps.

But, although the linear sequence of planned change appears to be a fairly disconnected set of steps that schools undertake in response to external pressures, the process may provide a rational veneer behind which teachers, administrators, and parents use intuition, common sense logic, strategies such as muddling through, and other less rational tactics to move from initial concerns to desired changes in instruction. Mitchell's use of problem solving meetings for "talking things out" is a case in point. These teachers used meetings of the Decision Making Group to toss ideas around informally -- as they always had. In this view, problem

solving activities provide an arena in which decisions are made through indigenous processes more compatible with the day-to-day behavior of the participants.

Additionally, the problem solving process and its independent activities may serve other useful purposes. At Jefferson, for example, the process provided an opportunity to surface and resolve conflicts and to cement relationships that survived a protracted teacher strike. In other sites, the process provided opportunities for teachers to try out new roles and to gain recognition and status. The existence of a problem before solutions or the use of formal criteria to guide the selection of a reading program lended an aura of legitimacy to the program. The process provided opportunities for administrators, teachers and parents to observe each other under different circumstances. Extensive deliberations undoubtedly created a sense of ownership on the part of the members of the Decision Making Group. Participation by teachers and parents undoubtedly conveyed the image of anything but a top-down process. Ideologies promulgated and reinforced by the process such as "implementers as choosers" undoubtedly carried efforts through rocky times. Breaking the process into concrete steps may provide reassurance for participants who, otherwise, may get nervous at not knowing what to do next or where the end will be. Or, the process may serve as an important ceremony which the linking agent convenes to document his or her own authority and uses as a basis for celebrating the sacraments of change. In this view, participants receive the same psychological and spiritual benefits that accrue from any religious ceremony. The ceremony provides spiritual support and the sacraments outline the pathway to salvation. Once completed, participants become missionaries and themselves begin to spread the gospel to other schools.

While most of these alternative purposes are impossible to document, they provide some tantalizing suggestions for what a linear model can contribute to change in schools. In the future, these elusive, multi-faceted contributions need to be explored in greater depth.

Reactions to the decision making process varied among sites.

Both linkers and participants in various sites reacted differently to the rational decision making process used to select the reading program.

The midwest linkers (Alison Gray and Hastings), for example, complained more about the inflexibility of the process than did others. They implied that their intimate knowledge of local conditions provided a more effective basis for selecting and executing an innovation than did a standardized lock-step set of procedures.

At Hastings and Mitchell, teachers appeared to agree that much of the specified process was unnecessary -- or at least overemphasized. In contrast, the staff of Jefferson School was reportedly quite satisfied with the process. They praised the participation of representatives from diverse constituencies and the orderly, deliberate consideration of problems, criteria, and alternative programs. Together, participation and orderliness were seen by the Jefferson staff as creating a broad and deep awareness about the innovation which was crucial to successful implementation.

The reasons for these varied reactions to the Consortium's decision process are difficult to pinpoint because of the limitations of the information about specific schools. However, these different reactions raise an issue about the relationships of local norms to the general assumptions underlying centrally-coordinated dissemination efforts.

Interestingly, the sites nearest The NETWORK, Inc. appeared more comfortable with the prescribed sequence of events than sites in the central or upper midwest. This may have been influenced by the more frequent contact between the linker and eastern headquarters in the northeast sites. But, it seems equally plausible that the community norms and values of this region may be more congruent with some of the assumptions underlying the change process itself -- i.e., a belief in the efficacy of rational problem solving, the value of outside experts, and the superiority of external knowledge.

In contrast, these assumptions appear less consistent with the local values and norms existing in Hastings, Mitchell, or Alison Gray. In these settings, "muddling through" or "hunting and pecking" seem to be favored over more systematic approaches. Outside experts are viewed with as much scepticism as respect. In Alison Gray, for example, the initial training activity conducted by an outside expert was poorly received and nearly resulted in the sites pulling out of the project.

Whether these different reactions are a function of size, regional locations, or ruralness is open to question. But some areas appear to have strong local orientations, values, or norms and a unique indigenous tempo or structure for making decisions, adopting programs, training staff and putting ideas into action. Approaches to change which are based on more universal or cosmopolitan values -- rationality before intuition, lineaity over muddling through, or universal as opposed to particular criteria -- seem to fare less well in such areas. Continuing the process-as-ceremony discussion from the previous section, ritual or ceremony developed by Protestants would not be expected to elicit the same reactions from participants of the Catholic faith as

from other Protestants. Similarly, processes based on modern, cosmopolitan values should not be expected to work across other value systems.

This issue warrants further consideration. Perhaps approaches which emphasize rationality and outside expertise can be effectively adapted or modified in communities that value "home-grown" solutions.

Unanticipated outcomes or second order changes occurred across sites and are as significant as those which were intended.

Evaluations of change in schools are traditionally guided by two central questions: (1) did the change improve achievement scores? and (2) were the intended objectives reached? Left outside the scope of most evaluations is the possibility that the activity may have produced unofficially intended or wholly unanticipated changes of critical importance. Schools are complex organizations and it is always possible, for example, that efforts to change instruction can alter the way that teachers relate to one another -- or to the principal. Sometimes these second-order changes represent outcomes which, from an organizational perspective, are more interesting and even potentially more desirable than the original objectives. In all the sites, second-order changes in various parts of the school were reported by teachers, administrators, or parents. While it was sometimes difficult to determine whether "changes" had existed before the project began, they were reported fairly consistently across various respondents.

a. Altered or expanded roles

Across the six sites, roles often changed. At Jefferson, the role of the reading specialist changed from providing advice and expertise to teachers to operating enrichment classes for groups of students. In both the Bridgetown and Jefferson Schools, adult aides and volunteers are now used more extensively in classrooms than they were three years ago. Because of the highly structured nature of MIRP, teachers have well-defined roles and they are able to delegate interesting instructional tasks to aides and volunteers. At Mitchell, English teachers' perceptions of their role has shifted to include reading instruction. At Alison Gray, the principal leads meetings more effectively and recognizes the need for him to delegate more authority than he did prior to the project.

b. Changed relationships

In addition to changes in individual roles, relationships among teachers, specialists, and administrators were altered

in a number of sites. At Bridgetown, the relationship between teachers and specialists has changed from specialists as experts to teachers as experts and specialists as looking for something else to do. At Jefferson, teachers turn frequently to each other for advice on instructional techniques and those more experienced in the MIRP methodology serve as mentors for teachers who are just beginning. At Mitchell, teachers communicate regularly about work-related matters in a relationship described as "open, sharing, and pulling together." At Alison Gray, detailed information about students has increased the confidence teachers feel in conferring with parents. At Jefferson, parents are free to visit any classroom at any time, provided they let the principal know in advance.

c. Administrative practices

In a few cases, administrative practices and procedures changed. At Jefferson, the principal's staff evaluation criteria now reflect the instructional orientation of MIRP. At Alison Gray, the concept of a Decision Making Group has reportedly spread to the district level, where a curriculum change will be decided and monitored by a group comprised of teachers, administrators, and parents.

d. Reputations

At Jefferson, participation in the RDU effort has changed the reputation of the school with the district and with parents and local residents. Because of lower class clientele and the legacy of the open-space architecture, Jefferson's image had been less rigorous than that of other schools in the district. For a variety of reasons, real and symbolic, the reputation appears to have shifted and Jefferson is seen as an innovative but instructionally solid school.

e. Instructional technology

Changes are also reported in instructional technology across the sites. Although instructional change is an intended outcome of the RDU program, there are some alterations which are more elusive unless a more sophisticated concept is applied. An organization's technology is a set of beliefs about the link between strategies and outcomes. In schools, the technology of instruction is normally underdeveloped: ends are vague, and which techniques work or why is unclear. In the MIRP schools, there are indications that a more well-developed technology is emerging. Teachers are able to describe very specifically what they do and why it works. Teachers have strong beliefs about the superiority of MIRP over other methods and can supply an endless list of anecdotes which illustrate its success. At both Bridgetown and Mitchell, teachers emphasize that what students learn is highly visible. At Mitchell, a teacher men-

tions that he doesn't like MIRP but "maybe it's because he's doing something wrong." At Jefferson, the principal was asked what would happen if the level of reading scores in the school were to fall. He answered: "I would call the developer to see what we are doing wrong in carrying out the program." Teachers with master's degrees in reading mention that despite all their schooling, they never knew how to teach reading prior to MIRP.

In some MIRP schools, teachers believe fervently that the approach works and have developed outcome measures which support their beliefs. Although in other sites, changes were noted in diagnostic approaches, the unanticipated impact of MIRP on teachers' confidence and the school-wide belief that the program works are interesting. This issue will be explored further in the next section.

f. Adventure and excitement

Finally, the process provided ample opportunities for recognition, adventure, and rejuvenation. Working conditions in schools are not always the best. Teachers spend most of their time with large groups of students isolated from colleagues. There are few opportunities for advancement outside of becoming an administrator (Lortie, 1975). And crises, problems, and the telephone prevent most administrators from keeping up-to-date professionally. Participating in the project provided both teachers and administrators a sense of spirit, excitement, and opportunities which day-to-day school life seldom provides.

Bridgetown and Jefferson teachers were able to present their experience with MIRP at professional conferences and have been used as consultants to help other schools implement the program. For many teachers at Jefferson and Bridgetown the experience was "like a religion -- being reborn." Some have returned to school for master's degrees because of the enthusiasm generated by MIRP. At Cramer, teachers enjoyed the opportunities to attend conferences and the exposure to new ideas. At Hastings, teachers felt more professional because they were able to do the program themselves. The experiences provided an excellent opportunity for recognition among their peers.

To summarize: Across six diverse sites, some common themes emerged: (1) parents played a peripheral role; (2) there was an important interplay between the process and existing events; (3) the participation of principals, although at times peripheral, was important; (4) linkers adapted their roles to site and stages of the process; (5) the relationship between new products and existing practices varied across sites with and was related to implementation; (6) the relationships among the stages of the problem solving process was unclear; (7) location influenced the way that the

process evolved; and (8) unanticipated outcomes often altered rather dramatically organizational patterns which typify public schools.

RDU AND THE LITERATURE ON CHANGE

How much difference did RDU make in the six sites?

For three years, teachers and administrators in six schools worked to improve some aspect of reading instruction. As the process of change evolved, a number of common issues emerged which often made things more difficult, but occasionally provided a positive force. As the three years draw to a close, a reasonable question is: did the effort make any difference? In answering this question a number of different criteria immediately come to mind, each conveying a unique set of expectations for what impact RDU should have had.

At the policy level, conclusions about RDU's effectiveness will undoubtedly focus on the original intent of its designers. From this perspective summary judgments might include the following: a problem solving process was followed in six sites, but with questionable utility and effect. Neither is there much evidence to suggest that rational, linear problem solving is now a regular feature in the six schools. Linking agents played an important role early in the process, but the role itself will not become a permanent one in the site. Nor is there much hope that the responsibilities of the linker's role will be assumed by others since the linkers often filled unique functional gaps at different sites. Although R&D products were adopted and implemented, they were often used to supplement existing practices, and MIRP -- one of the most interesting of the products -- was selected from the NDN rather than the R&D resource pool. Finally, the issue of continuation and expansion of the uses of products is unclear although in several sites, expansion seems well underway.

At other levels, however, the criteria used to judge RDU's impact will be different. At the project level, interest may center on how well schools were able to implement products, the influence of the linking agent, or how much was learned about how schools might be changed. Less attention may be given to whether the problem solving process or linker's role was actually institutionalized. At the local level, the experience of RDU will probably be evaluated on how well the experience met initial, and often unspoken, private objectives. Teachers may emphasize the excitement and adventure of the process, the opportunities to meet new colleagues, the renewed confidence in their instructional

techniques, or differences in responses of students to teaching. Administrators may call attention to a more positive school image, opportunities to attend professional conferences, higher morale among staff, or the joy of being seen as a "change" agent. Parents will notice more enthusiastic students and such things as more frequent progress reports. The community may take pride that a local school was the center of attention for a while and is now seen as innovative but without pushing changes beyond community values.

The point is that at each level, different conclusions might be drawn about how well RDU worked, its significant contributions, and why it seemed to make a difference. But there is another perspective that may help shed some light on the RDU program -- the literature on educational change.

From the perspective of the change literature, the experiences of the six Consortium sites is relatively unique, interesting -- and successful. As noted earlier in the introduction, the educational change literature generally suggests a fairly bleak prognosis for activities that attempt to change various features of public schools. Although there are undoubtedly success stories which never find their way into periodicals, books, or ERIC, the change literature suggests that three less desirable outcomes are more likely: (1) no change -- "the more things change, the more they stay the same" (Sarason, 1971); (2) symbolic change "if you look hard enough (and truly believe) you'll see it" (Smith and Keith, 1971; Davis et al., 1977); or (3) as changes become visible, conflict erupts which encourages a return to the status quo -- "now you see it; now you don't" (Deal and Nutt, 1979). Charters and Jones (1975) have developed a framework which helps to interpret these outcomes and which also provides an alternative set of criteria for assessing RDU's impact in the six sites. They outline five levels of change in educational organizations:

> Level One: institutional commitment -- the program is announced and its intents are made public
>
> Level Two: structural context -- formal arrangements and physical conditions are altered
>
> Level Three: role performance -- the behavior of teachers and administrators changes
>
> Level Four: learning activities -- students do things differently
>
> Level Five: learning rates improve

In some instances changes end with formal pronouncements; in others the process is aborted after structural arrangements

are altered. Efforts often run aground on the shoals of Levels Three and Four as resistance increases and conflict erupts. Laying the Charters and Jones framework against the experiences of the six sites suggests the following: Changes in all six RDU sites moved through Levels One and Two. Local projects were announced and publicized, linking agents were hired, and Decision Making Groups were formed. But, in the case studies and epilogues there is also evidence that, in most sites, changes were made in Levels Three and Four as well -- without overwhelming resistance or destructive conflict. By this standard, the experience of the six Consortium sites was relatively successful -- and somewhat atypical. Although there are many other aspects of the Consortium effort which deserve more attention and interpretation, the remainder of this paper focuses on explaining and interpreting the outcomes.

Explaining the Pattern of Change in the Six Sites

Since the pattern and outcomes of change in the six sites deviated from those typically found in the literature on change, generating some explanations or interpretations may stimulate some new guidelines for practice or directions for future research. Why were local sites able to produce changes in the behavior of administrators, teachers, and students without the anticipated resistance and conflict? Five explanations seem plausible.

One explanation is that in three of the six sites, at least, some obvious resistance was reduced because reading programs were designed to supplement rather than replace existing practices. Resistance to change is probably greatest when people have to give something up -- or lose it -- to implement an innovation (Marris, 1975). Add-ons provide a "bubble" in which people can try new things with the accompanying feelings of excitement, adventure, and recognition without permanently changing established ways. When the funding stops, the bubble probably bursts leaving the traditional program intact and old behavior reinforced. But while the bubble lasts, there may exist practices quite different from those in the regular repertoire.

A second explanation is that in all six sites, community support was maintained by limiting changes to the reading program. The improvement of reading is compatible with current concern of parents and local communities to place more emphasis on basic skills. In three sites, reading could be improved without eliminating the existing program thereby activating concerns of some parents or residents. And in all six, the reading programs selected were not radically different from conventional practices -- at least when viewed from the outside. In addition, any parent or community member who became concerned could be reassured, in most sites,

by noting the presence of a parent or community member on the Decision Making Group that selected the innovations. For these reasons, the change probably did not violate any conditions of the existing pact between schools and community. Consequently, the prerogatives of the professional license, in all likelihood, gave teachers and administrators the right to move ahead without community interference. For the most part, the change did not violate any provisions of the existing agreement between schools and communities. If the caretaker role was exercised, the program passed inspection, and parents and the local community did not interfere.

A third explanation finds support in the three MIRP sites: Bridgetown (particularly the K - 3 wing), Jefferson, and Mitchell (although the effect there was not as strong). In these sites, the innovation replaced existing practices, required significant shifts in teacher behavior, added enormous expenditures of personal time and energy, and changed the role of students.

Because MIRP is quite conventional in appearance -- student progress reports, competition, recitation, large group instruction -- it is easy to see why parents or local community members would not be alarmed and interfere. Assessing the "vital signs" of MIRP or seeing the program in action would cause most adults to reminisce about school days gone by. But, at the same time, it seems highly likely that an innovation like MIRP would encounter significant teacher resistance -- particularly at the upper grades. But resistance was minimal at Mitchell and the 4 - 6 wing at Bridgetown. And at Bridgetown's primary wing and at Jefferson, enthusiasm and excitement -- rather than resistance -- characterized the predominant reaction of teachers. While the reason for MIRP's success is undoubtedly a complex interweaving of a number of variables -- administrative support (higher at Jefferson and the K - 3 wing at Bridgetown), length of training, or simplicity -- another notion is appealing. It is no secret that many teachers in schools today are feeling the stress of being reminded constantly that they make no difference. Teachers themselves often have no clear rationale, theory or set of beliefs to support what they do. Enter MIRP which participants report as an intensive, high-powered training package (reminiscent of <u>est</u>) which offers an approach that <u>will</u> work and <u>will</u> get results if teachers will follow a prescribed regimen -- a claim it can substantiate with "research." All that is required is hard work -- which "professionals" do anyway. Teachers are thus provided a cohesive set of beliefs which links teaching strategies with learning results and classroom control. In effect, teachers are provided with an instructional technology -- something that the profession (or semi-profession) currently lacks.

As teachers prepare for implementing the program, the following sequence may occur: teachers lean on one another for support, share a common language and world-view, reinforce the ideology, and collectively prepare materials and share them with one another. One view of the process suggests that MIRP may build a professional culture among teachers. And as teachers "see" the results of their new approach with students, the culture may become self-fulfilling: faith is reinforced, insiders become more cohesive, and outsiders are of little use except as "scapegoats" or potential new recruits. By focusing attention on tangible student outcomes which are sensitive to a rote approach, parents embrace the faith and their confidence in teachers is restored. If their faith begins to erode, testimonials of other parents, anecdotes of miracle "cures" from teachers, or a visit to see the program in action -- a familiar ritual -- will restore the bloom. Teachers who have difficulty with the program must not be doing it right. If achievement scores go down, teachers must not be doing something quite right and may need a new revival in the form of training. While this line of reasoning is highly speculative, it seems plausible that MIRP establishes a belief system which provides the basis for a professional culture.

As the culture spreads, new converts are won, parents provide positive feedback, administrators provide support, and -- if the conditions are right -- the culture can diffuse through the entire school. MIRP through its unique approach and ideological emphasis provides basis for an organizational saga (Clark, 1975). Sagas arise in times of crisis or in new institutions. Once in place, sagas become self-fulfilling and bind participants together in a collective understanding of cherished beliefs. An organization with a strong saga claims unique programmatic features, special goals, and positive results. These claims are supported by all participants -- including members of the environment. An organization with a saga is a beloved institution. For the most part the sagas of public schools are relatively weak. But the patterns produced by the MIRP program may indicate the development of a strong organizational saga. This is particularly true at Jefferson.

The MIRP approach suggests that innovations which require the replacement of existing practices may be best supported by "religious-like" training which provides participants a new set of beliefs and myths. Such approaches may be particularly effective when old beliefs are tenuously held. MIRP may be successful because it provides teachers with a technology or a culture, and -- where administrators support the faith -- the opportunity to be part of a beloved institution. Interestingly, in some cases, teachers followed the MIRP approach without adjusting it, a finding which challenges the blanket statement that teacher-proof approaches will not work.

A fourth explanation for the significant changes in the Consortium sites without accompanying resistance or conflict may be the contribution of the linking agent. Undoubtedly, any innovation needs someone to support it, protect it, rekindle enthusiasm when the momentum slackens, restore confidence when something does not go quite right, provide resources when they are needed, absorb frustration, offer solace, or call attention to current or future payoffs when the balance between time spent and rewards received becomes unfavorable. Usually these are functions of administrators. But because they have more important crises to deal with and are enmeshed in internal politics, administrators are not always able to provide the support an innovation needs -- particularly at key times. Throughout the case studies, there are examples of linking agents keeping the program on track, giving support, obtaining resources and providing other kinds of assistance which moves the innovation along. In the most extreme case, a linking agent kept a program alive (Cramer); even when the innovation moved to another school, the linking agent found a new teacher who needed some instant help and this teacher became the "project."

A fifth explanation is that the process itself may have helped pave the way for making changes without providing undue interference. Although the rational sequence of problem solving steps appeared as segmented activities disconnected from one another, the process may have provided opportunities for negotiating conflicts, sharing concerns, coopting recalcitrants, creating shared meanings, developing a sense of ownership or a stake in the effort and offering everyone an opportunity to shape the effort to meet individual needs. Internally, the process symbolized a departure from top-down change and "grass roots" expertise and professionalism. Externally, the process may have served as an elaborate ceremony symbolizing the care and systematic attention that was being given to responding to educational problems by a diverse group of people. Myths, stories, and perceptions are critical to changing organizations -- either in protecting and supporting or in undermining the effort. Although the level of detail in the case studies does not provide sufficient information to support this fifth explanation, it seems entirely plausible that the process contributed to the change in these less rational ways. In this view once it served its symbolic purpose of legitimizing the change, the process was scrapped and the linking agent inherited the role of implementing and supporting the innovation.

CONCLUSION

Past efforts to change schools have not always reached the anticipated objectives. Why schools have experienced so much difficulty in altering old ways has produced a variety of explanations which are then used to develop new strategies. The RDU program integrated three emerging explanations into a strategy which relied on external knowledge, linking agents, and a systematic process of identifying and solving problems to help selected schools change reading instruction. Looking at the process of change in six schools, it is apparent that as the RDU strategy reached the reality of schools, many of its underlying features took new directions or developed unanticipated wrinkles. These are captured in the issues which arose across the six sites. But it seems equally apparent that, although overall impact of the program is difficult to establish, six sites changed reading instruction without experiencing the negative by-products which often accompany such efforts.

In discussing these non-typical patterns across sites, we have attempted to raise some new issues around change that need to be explored in more depth. Many of these issues, non-rational in nature, appear to have a profound impact on the school as an instructional system and as an organization. While we acknowledge that our prior research may have led us to look for non-rational influences on school functioning, there seems to be ample evidence in the case studies and the epilogues to indicate that such an analysis is far from fictitious. If through this paper we are able to stimulate some debate and further research, then perhaps when another opportunity for improving schools arises -- for sound or symbolic reasons, non-rational factors may better be taken into account.

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